

Death and Mr Pickwick Chronicles - Volume 9

by Stephen Jarvis



March 31



- Here is a picture of me with *Death and Mr Pickwick* fans John Stafford Ricketts and Lord John Bird, along with Lord Bird's son Sonny, raising a glass in honour of *Mr Pickwick's* 180th birthday. The picture was taken in the Magpie and Stump pub, near the Old Bailey in London, and we chose that pub for three reasons: 1) There is a pub called The Magpie and Stump in *The Pickwick Papers*...



- 2) In the 1700s, the *Magpie and Stump* was one of the most renowned 'mughouses' in London, where people would gather for a prime view of hangings taking place at Newgate Prison (note the noose on display in the pub) - and this recalls the lurid magazine *The Newgate Calendar*, which is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- ▶ 3) The magpie in the pub's name of course brings to mind the magpie which appears at the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- Of course, there had to be some eating too...



- ▶ John Stafford Ricketts pointed out that in one of pictures it looks like I am aiming a blowpipe at Lord Bird!

March 31



- One of Seymour's last drawings featured a statue of William III in Dublin. Peter Stadler's latest fascinating post tells us more about this statue.



- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about the equestrian statue of King William III in Dublin, blown away by agitators. The King William of Orange statue on College Green was eventually removed in November 1928, following an explosion in the early hours of Armistice Day that year. A bomb had also been placed at the base of the bronze statue of King George II in Stephens Green. It had sat on College Green since 1701, and was frequently the target of vandals (more on that below) but the explosion didn't mark the end of its traumatic life as the King's head was removed from the statue while it was placed in storage in Corporation Yard, Hanover Street!



WILLIAM OF ORANGE. STATUE IN COLLEGE GREEN, DUBLIN.
WWW.ARTSTOCKS.COM - 1829/1830

- ▶ "The text below is taken from the brief commentary on the statue that comes in *Ireland in Pictures*, dating from 1898:
- ▶ This equestrian statue of William III stands in College Green, and has stood there, more or less, since A.D. 1701. We say "more or less" because no statue in the world, perhaps, has been subject to so many vicissitudes. It has been insulted, mutilated and blown up so many times, that the original figure, never particularly graceful, is now a battered wreck, pieced and patched together, like an old, worn-out garment. In 1710 the statue was smeared with mud and its sceptre stolen by several students from nearby Trinity College, who were expelled. It was smeared with tar several times, and watchmen had to be posted at the statue to protect it.



- "I have also posted a picture of the equestrian statue of King William III in St James Square London from 1808."

March 31



- ▶ Herb Moskowitz has just sent me this, in response to my request for pics celebrating the 180th anniversary of *The Pickwick Papers*. Many thanks, Herb
- ▶ "Happy Birthday, Mr Pickwick!"
- ▶ And thanks Stephen for reminding the inevitable Boppers about this momentous anniversary, and for the delightful idea of sending in pics of celebrations around the world
- ▶ Here is a selfie (it's my first, and I had no idea how difficult they can be), with my Panda Teddy Bear named Pickwick - you can see I loved Dickens even when I was a kid - and a mug from the Philadelphia Dickens Inn - alas, no more. The mug holds root beer; I hope that is okay, but I rarely have alcohol in the house."

April 1



- ▶ A review of *Death and Mr. Pickwick* has just appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*, which I shall respond to tomorrow, because I no longer believe that 'keeping quiet' is the right advice. I have indeed already received the comments of one DaMP fan, which you will see below the review. Anyway, here it is:
- ▶ Reviewed by Adam Abraham, University of Oxford:
Stephen Jarvis. Death and Mr. Pickwick. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015. Pp. . 530.00; £20.00.
- ▶ The artist Robert Seymour is known to posterity for two accomplishments: he created the first illustration of Samuel Pickwick and, in the month of Mr. Pickwick's debut, committed suicide. A definitive life of the artist has yet to be written. In the meantime, there is *Death and Mr. Pickwick*, a novel by Stephen Jarvis.



- ▶ Events may not have transpired exactly as Jarvis portrays them, but he offers a sympathetic portrait of a troubled man. Of course, if Seymour is to be a sympathetic character, then someone else must be unsympathetic. To pity Sahari, we are obliged to see Mozart as a monster or a buffoon. Three days before Robert Seymour pulled the trigger to end his life, he met (perhaps for the first and last time) Charles Dickens. Was the young author too rough with the sensitive artist? Did Dickens, the single-minded taskmaster bent on success, drive Seymour to an early grave and future oblivion? A suicide note (quoted by Jarvis) implodes the grieving Mrs. Seymour to blame no one. But the question raised by this novel is not who killed Seymour but rather who created *The Pickwick Papers*, which became a publishing and cultural phenomenon like no other.

Pickwickian

- Critics will call *Death and Mr. Pickwick* Dickensian, which is code for long. Perhaps we should call the new work Pickwickian: digressive, heterogeneous, and long. Jarvis, in Pickwickian mode, deploys interpolated tales - short stories, local legends, historical anecdotes. But like some nineteenth-century imitations of *Pickwick*, Jarvis's novel upsets the balance between the center and the periphery: digressions overwhelm the main thrust. Like *Pickwick* itself, *Death and Mr. Pickwick* offers a fictional frame to get things going. A man known to us as Mr. Inbeliccate employs someone he calls Inscriptino (aka Scripty) to write the story of *Pickwick's* origins, based on Inbeliccate's research. Seymour, the main character in the resulting narrative, dies on page 534, with more than 250 pages to go.



- Seymour was a successful visual artist with a brilliant idea. He wanted to produce a monthly publication, with images and letters, built around the theme of a fictional London-based club. Other fictional clubs had appeared in print in the eighteenth century, for instance, both Edward Ward and Henry Fielding explored the genre. But Seymour's timing was superb. The publisher Chapman and Hall liked his proposal, and the next is literary history: Seymour had Seymour lived, would Pickwick exist for Pickwick? In 1834, his widow, the former Jane Holmes, composed a pamphlet, *An Account of the Origin of the "Pickwick Papers"*. She wrote, "I find there have been no Mr. Seymour, the *Pickwick Papers* could not have been written; but had there been no Dickens, they would have been written notwithstanding." One wonders by whom? In the words of G. K. Chesterton, "It was quite easy to imagine Pickwick. The difficulty was to write it." James does not quote Mrs. Seymour's pamphlet, even though *An Account of the Origin of the "Pickwick Papers"* could be the novel's subtitle.



- One question raised by Jarvis's book is the lot of satire. The dust jacket assures us that we are reading "A Novel," but this may be a misleading label: some people still treat novels. Jarvis's book explores the status of non-fiction or at least a non-fiction novel, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*. At times, *Death and Mr. Pickwick* reads like a sketchbook or a series of detached essays on early nineteenth-century print culture. One wishes that it included an index, so that interested readers could trace what Jarvis has to say about "Ligeia, Peveril" or "Pygmalion in London." At other times, the book reads like a solid reversion of *The Pickwick Papers*. Jarvis retells the incident of Mr. Pickwick and the suspicious colonel, for instance, but adds nothing to Dickens's account. One might as well read the source. In such passages, Jarvis's book is closer to paraphrase or even plagiarism. Indeed, *Death and Mr. Pickwick* is a mislabeled "a book about a book. As one observed character says, "My long life has been dominated by one author—specifically, one book by that one author" (114).



- Ultimately, the generic description that may not best or remain a theme. The argument is that Dickens best or intentionally misled readers in his various Pickwick prefacing Mr. Inglethorp (or perhaps Jarvis) fails to recognize that a preface is a paratext, rather like the editors to Pickwick prospectus, published on 26 March 1836, or even the monthly wrapper, which relates that the new work is "edited by 'him'." In fact, it was written by Charles Dickens. Yet despite our Mr. Pickwick wonders if the misleading prefacing form "the greatest literary hoax in history" (742). The villain is John Fopple, who conceals the beautiful cover up of Seymour's original conception (whatever it was) in order to protect Dickens's reputation and, not incidentally, "the dignity of literature." Jarvis's novel thus reveals the efforts of the Shakespeare doubters (Jas and Sir Horatio). It is not that they are wrong. It is that it does not matter. If conclusive proof eventually shows that Christopher Marlowe or the Earl of Oxford wrote the works we attribute to Shakespeare, they would still be very good plays.



- The strongest evidence to support the view that Seymour "created" Pickwick is that, before *The Pickwick Papers*, he had a tendency to draw (End Page 66) overweight, bespectacled men. Samuel W. Lambart's 1924 book *How the Pickwick Men Fishing makes the classic, proto Pickwick appear in at least two of Seymour's earlier publications, *Alpines and Moors for an Amateur*, and *Elements of Fishing* (1833) and *The Boat of Llandudno* (1834). But what does it mean to create a literary character? If Seymour draws a pudgy merlin rights and gaffers, has he created Samuel Pickwick or is drawing of a pudgy man in rights and gaffers? Neither. Decades later Seymour invented the name Pickwick, that belonged to coach proprietor Messrs Pickwick. Jokes, nevertheless, make a convincing case that the raw materials that were synthesized into Dickens's breakthrough work were all available by the 1830s. London clubs and gaming operations, Washington Irving and Pierce Egan, Dr. Syntax and Jocko, the theatrical performers of Charles Mathews and Jane Hale. According to the novel, the villain was Robert Seymour, but in a fit of rage, he burns all the evidence.*



Jarvis is at his best when describing details of nineteenth-century life: the Fleet prison, the processes of book making and etching, and the Pickwick phenomenon itself. The two most vivid characters are not Dickens and Seymour but rather Robert Buss, the unfortunate successor to the late artist, and "Mr H," another obsessive who creates an index and a now-lost concordance to *Pickwick*. (One C. M. Heale produced *An Index to Pickwick*, in 1897.) Admirers of Dickens may feel frustrated by Jarvis, he insists on calling the novelist "Chatham Charlie" and later "Doc," whereas other historical characters are designated by their names. Dickens scholars may further wonder why Jarvis fails to explore Master Humphrey's *Clock*, in which Dickens revived *Pickwick* and the Wollers. But for an in-depth view of nineteenth-century print culture and an exploration of one literary masterpiece's extraordinary impact, *Death and Mr Pickwick* has much to offer.

THE F-WORD

- ▶ As I said, I shall reply to this review tomorrow, but I have already shown it to one DaMP fan, and this was the response:
- ▶ "Are you averse to swear words? I think not.
- ▶ What a fucking joke! I heartily disagree with this review. Adam Abraham is off the mark and, in my umble (a la Uriah Heep) opinion, a little too in love with the marketing of "Charlie" Dickens as the jolly father of Christmas and such. The last line is damning praise. He says that DaMP has much to offer after he has panned it!!!"
- ▶ Jeze!
- ▶ It IS a novel, and I read it as such. While it is meticulously researched, it is still fiction. Step back from your high horse and holier-than-thou attitude Mr. Abraham!
- ▶ Just my righteous two cents' worth."

April 1



- ▶ Here is Peter Stadlera's latest post, which deals with a place connected to the judge in the trial of Lord Melbourne - the trial which influenced *Bardell V Pickwick*.
- ▶ "*In Death and Mr Pickwick* we read that Justice Gasalee was buried in the Old Foundling Chapel, Guildford Street.



INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL OF THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

- ▶ "That Chapel is part of the Foundling Hospital in London.
- ▶ The Foundling Hospital was founded in 1739 by the philanthropic sea captain Thomas Coram. It was a children's home established for the 'education and maintenance of exposed and deserted young children.' The word 'hospital' was used in a more general sense than it is today, simply indicating the institution's 'hospitality' to those less fortunate.



- “Nevertheless, one of the top priorities of the committee at the Foundling Hospital was children’s health, as they combated small-pox, fevers, consumption and dysentery, all of which drove up mortality rates and risked epidemics.



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- ▶ "With their energies focused on maintaining a disinfected environment, providing simple clothing and fare, the committee paid less attention to, and spent less on, developing children's education. As a result financial problems would hound the institution for years to come, despite the growing 'fashionableness' of charities like the hospital.



- "The Foundling Hospital still has a legacy on the original site. Seven acres of it were purchased for use as a playground for children with financial support from the newspaper proprietor Lord Rothermere. This area is now called Coram's Fields and owned by an independent charity, Coram's Fields and the Harmsworth Memorial Playground.



- "The Foundling Hospital itself bought back 2.5 acres of land in 1937 and built a new headquarters and a children's centre on the site. Although smaller, the building is in a similar style to the original Foundling Hospital and important aspects of the interior architecture were recreated there. It now houses the Foundling Museum, an independent charity, where the art collection can be seen.



- "The original charity still exists as Coram, registered under the name Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, and is one of London's largest children's charities, operating in adjacent buildings constructed in the 1950s. Elements of the Hospital's routine make appearances in Charles Dickens's 1830s novel *Oliver Twist*, even though Oliver was not placed in the Foundling Hospital itself.



- ▶ "Dickens explains that 'When he was handed over to the workhouse, a "token" was left, as well... though not through the Hospital's properly regulated system... by which his mother, had her fortunes improved, might have re-claimed him.' Oliver was sent out to work by the workhouse, with the workhouse obtaining financial benefit from his employment. In what might be another connection, Mr. Bumble's famous objection to workhouse boys having meat in their diet - "It makes them 'wicked!'" - could have found its way into the story as a nod to the fact that the Foundling Hospital's regulations specifically state that the children should have meat at some meals, while other meals should consist of "Roots or herbs".

April 2



- ▶ Yesterday, I posted the review of *Doath and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*. I want to say some things in response. This will take more than one day.
- ▶ Let me begin by replying to the statement which is probably the gravest accusation made by the reviewer: "At times, the book reads like a pallid rewrite of *The Pickwick Papers*. Jarvis retells the incident of Mr. Pickwick and the pugnacious cabman, for instance, but adds nothing to Dickens's account. One might as well read the source."
- ▶ This is demonstrably wrong, and I am not indulging in nit-picking, hair-splitting or blatant self-justification when I say that. There is a major point to be made here.



Illustration by John Leech

CHARLES DICKENS

The Pickwick Papers

- ▶ When I first read *The Pickwick Papers*, and I came across the incident of the pugnacious cabman, I can remember being rather mystified by the central event, in which the cabman reacts very strangely when Mr Pickwick asks the age of the horse - and this is the incident which leads to the punch-up, and to Jingle's rescuing of Mr Pickwick. I suspect that most modern-day editors of *The Pickwick Papers* are mystified by it too - or at least do not fully understand what is going on. Certainly, there is no adequate explanation in the notes to the Penguin edition of *Pickwick*, edited by Mark Wormald, which I imagine is the most widely-read modern edition of *Pickwick*. (This edition was the recommended one at the 2007 Dickens Universe on *Pickwick*.) Nor is it explained in another well-known edition of *Pickwick*, the OUP edition, edited by James Ransley. Indeed, off the top of my head, I cannot recall seeing the incident being adequately explained in *ANY* edition of *Pickwick*. So the advice that you "might as well read the source" just doesn't help.



- ▶ You have to read very widely in the secondary and academic literature on *Pickwick* before you discover the solution to the mystery. Jonathan H. Grossman's *Charles Dickens's Networks: Public Transport and the Novel* is one of the few places that explains what's going on.
- ▶ The key to the incident of the pugnacious cabman is Martin's Act, a pioneering piece of legislation, which made it a crime to treat certain animals, including horses, cruelly, or to inflict unnecessary suffering upon them.



Richard Martin – MP & Animal Rights Campaigner

- ▶ The cabman obviously feared that Mr Pickwick was an informer, acting on behalf of an animal-welfare organisation. This would have been understood by readers in Dickens's time, but few modern readers will know about it, unless they take a special interest in the history of animal welfare, and so most readers will not truly understand the incident of the pugnacious cabman if they read *The Pickwick Papers*. But there is one thing they CAN do: they can read the explanation in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I very deliberately mentioned *Martin's Act*. This in itself refutes the reviewer's statement about adding "nothing to Dickens's account".



- ▶ Moreover, Martin's Act is not the only important additional information which appears in this part of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. For instance, I mention a contemporary warning about "adventurers", which provides a context for Jingle's appearance. I also provide an explanation for the peculiar apparatus that the pious carries - the spinning dial - which appears in Seymour's picture, but is not mentioned in Dickens's text at all.
- ▶ So let me ask you: how on earth can I be said to add nothing to Dickens's account? I think that, far from this section of my novel being "padded", you will find a vein of richness in *Death and Mr Pickwick* which simply does not exist in *The Pickwick Papers*, at least for modern-day readers, who will not automatically understand the historical context of the pugnacious cabman incident. That the reviewer should choose this very section of *Death and Mr Pickwick* as demonstrating his point is, frankly, laughable.
- ▶ I'll say more tomorrow.

April 2



- ▶ Here is another wonderful piece by Peter Stadlera. I particularly liked the pictures of the posters - the illustrated ones have the greater visual impact, but the one about the last performance at Vauxhall has more emotion attached to it.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Vauxhall Gardens in London. Well, let's go to this magnificent place in this post. With 100,000 visitors per summer, open-air dining and blazing fireworks displays, Vauxhall Gardens was the biggest attraction of its day and became the most famous pleasure garden in Europe.



► "The gardens opened each evening from May to September. Music, listened to in the open air while strolling through leafy groves, was the prime attraction. The first building you saw, on entering, was an octagonal roomed 'temple', in effect Britain's first bandstand. Its upper floor was big enough to house a full orchestra and there was a balcony for singers. Under the management of Jonathan Tyers, the Gardens aimed to bring contemporary music to a mass public, and poets, among them Christopher Smart, wrote many hundreds of songs especially for Vauxhall. Thomas Arne and William Boyce were favoured composers, but in Tyers' time it was Handel's music that dominated the repertory, and a marble statue of Handel by Roubiliac, now in the V&A, presided over the Gardens. In April 1749 the Music for the Royal Fireworks had its grand rehearsal at Vauxhall, prior to its damp exposure on the Thames, and 12,000 fans flocked to hear it, causing a three-hour traffic jam on London Bridge.



- ▶ "The 100,000 visitors per season that Vauxhall averaged were the largest audience for serious music that had ever been gathered. Vauxhall also provided England with a public art gallery long before the Royal Academy and the National Gallery were thought of. Tyers' artistic adviser was his friend William Hogarth, who employed tutors and students from his St Martin's Lane Academy to produce a series of big genre paintings for the Gardens, many of them by Francis Hayman who is now almost as forgotten as Tyers.







www.danby.co.uk





- ▶ "When the Gardens finally closed in 1859 it was not for lack of inventiveness. Rather it was because the suburbs had spread to Vauxhall, and the noise and crowds were intolerable for the new residents. Also, rail travel had put alternative amusements, notably the seaside, within reach. So history overtook them and they had to go."

April 3



- ▶ Continuing my response to the review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*...
- ▶ The reviewer claims that I fail to understand that the *Pickwick* prefaces, in which Dickens's lies appear, are a "paratext", rather like the *Pickwick* prospectus, or even the wrapper for the serial parts. I think the argument that is being made behind the academic jargon is that the prefaces should be seen as part of the "fictional universe" of *The Pickwick Papers* - and therefore they are not really lies, but are simply an extension of Dickens's work as an author of fiction. If this is the argument, then it is ridiculous.



- Dickens biographers have treated the prefaces as biographical statements, not paratexts, and that is surely right. When Dickens wrote to *The Athenaeum* magazine in response to the letter from Seymour's son, he largely repeated the arguments of the prefaces, in a public forum, not in the context of a book, and wanted the arguments accepted as the truth. And the prefaces are clearly very different from the prospectus and the wrapper: the prospectus describes the adventures of a fictional character, Mr Pickwick, and the wrapper treats Bogg as the editor of an imaginary set of club records. The prospectus and wrapper are obviously part of *Pickwick's* fictional universe; not so the prefaces.



- And the reviewer then makes the extraordinary statement that what I am saying does not matter anyway. He compares me to those who deny Shakespeare's authorship of the plays: "If conclusive proof eventually shows that Christopher Marlowe or the Earl of Oxford wrote the works we attribute to Shakespeare," says the reviewer, "they would still be very good plays." Yes, they would still be good plays; but to say that the identity of the author does not matter is a very different thing indeed.



- First of all, consider Redwick just from the point of view of Dickens' bibliography: is the reviewer really saying that if Dickens fabricated an origin for his most successful work by far – the work, moreover, which laid the foundations for his career – it is of no consequence at all? It surely means that every Dickens biography has to be rewritten, and that Dickens is different from the man we thought him to be. But it matters too when it comes to considering the *WORKS* of Dickens. To go back to Shakespeare: I have actually interviewed the Shakespeare Oxford Society, who believe that Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, wrote the plays – this was when I was writing about unusual clubs and societies – and I remember that they pointed out lines in the plays which seemed to have 'echoes' of things which had happened in de Vere's life, or in his family history. If Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon wrote the plays then those echoes would just be coincidences, nothing more; but if de Vere was the author, the echoes would add a whole new level of meaning to the text. Isn't that important?



- And similarly, if Dickens had about Seymour, and we're examining his works with that in mind, there is the possibility of new interpretations of Dickens's works emerging. Outside of *The Pickwick Papers*, I am not an expert on Dickens's oeuvre; I read all the novels when I started the Death and Mr Pickwick project, and that was that, but I strongly suspect that, if I were to re-read the novels, given what I now know about Seymour's involvement with *Templeton*, many new interpretations of the novel's situations and characters would emerge. Indeed in *David and Mr Pickwick*, I suggest that one interpolated tale in Nicholas Nickleby, that of the Baron of Grangeley, is very likely a commentary on Seymour. That there are more things like this in Dickens's works, I would in particular look out for things which suggest the fear of Nicholas being exposed because Dickens certainly was worried that the "truth would out" about Seymour – judging from his letters. So guessed that, one day, someone like me would come along.
- Seymour is a potential research programme for the system; why not re-read Dickens's works, in the light of Death of Mr Pickwick's revelations. I'd not paid it, but, their reviewer, one insight which could generate academic papers or chapters in books. Or well, you simply track those insights as well as an important and not go for publication!
- More tomorrow

April 3



- David Snowden has just made this very interesting observation about a Charlie Chaplin movie: "Occurred to me that the melancholic Greenwich & Son story in *Death and Mr. Pickwick*, was somehow reminiscent – although quite different too – of the tale in Charlie Chaplin's 1932 film *Lightsight*, wherein Chaplin star as fading clown, dogged with a fragile condition, *Celene*." I found out recently that one of the pieces of music in a Chaplin movie was called *Pickwick*. So perhaps there is a connection here. This is worth looking into, I think.



April 4



- ▶ Day three of my response to the review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*
- ▶ The reviewer suggests that the book's whole status as a novel is a marketing tactic, and even suggests that I "aspire" to writing non-fiction, and in support of this he claims that "At times, *Death and Mr Pickwick* reads like a sketchbook or a series of detached essays on early nineteenth-century print culture." This doesn't stand up to scrutiny for a moment. The style of *Death and Mr Pickwick* might be described as "full of life" - and I use that phrase because I was inspired to read *The Pickwick Papers* for the first time by Griff Rhys Jones's statement that *Pickwick* was "so full of life". The style is why *The Independent's* reviewer of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, a former Man-Booker Prize judge, said that the book "offers a reading experience as immersive as Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*", and as voracity in its capacity to connect us with past lives. This is nothing at all like an essay or a sketchbook on nineteenth-century print culture.

BIG BROTHER



- ▶ That full-of-life quality is something which motivated the writing throughout. There may be occasions when the style changes to a "forensic" one - which was absolutely necessary to pin down Dickens's lies - but even that can be seen as adding to the vast mixture of life which the book contains; and even the forensic style, embedded in the conversations of Scripty and Mr Imbecilate, is not at all like an essay on print culture. And nothing in my background suggests that I would WANT to write a non-fiction book on nineteenth-century print culture. I have openly admitted that I am heavily influenced by the TV series *Big Brother*; and my previous published writings were about broome leisure activities. How many historians of nineteenth-century print culture have that in their background or, if they did, would admit to it? I aspired to write a novel right from the start, a fact-influenced novel, sure, but still very much a novel.

1928

- And earlier in his piece, the reviewer maligns this statement about Seymour: "A definitive life of the artist has yet to be written. In the meantime, *Sage's Death* and *Mr. Pickwick*, a novel by Stephen Jarvis", as though my novel is a mere stopgap, and what is really needed is the biography. Let me tell you that it is extremely unlikely that a "definitive life" of Seymour will EVER be written – and that is because of the disgraceful behaviour of the Dickens Fellowship in the 1950s. On a number of previous occasions, I have mentioned that a huge amount of material about Seymour mysteriously vanished in 1928, and I strongly suspect that it was deliberately suppressed by the Dickens Fellowship of that era, who did not want Dickens's life exposed. But even if I am wrong about deliberate suppression, the Dickens Fellowship still bears a large part of the blame for the material being lost. As I have said before, the Dickensians knew about the material, and they could have pointed the Seymour researcher (or Seymour Lambert) to the reviewer mentioned in its direction – and the material would then almost certainly have been saved. They chose not to cooperate with Lambert, and publicly stated that his research into Seymour and Pickwick would even merit serious consideration. As a result, the material has been lost. As far as I know, I am the only person who has even bothered trying to find it.



- ▶ The behaviour of the Dickens Fellowship in the 1920s was cultural vandalism. As John Stafford Ricketts said in his recent *Sig Issue* article about *Death and Mr Pickwick*, "Pickwick remains a truly stupendous, quintessential novel, up there with the best of world literature." Anything which helps us to understand how *The Pickwick Papers* came into existence should be cherished. Instead, as a result of the behaviour of the Dickens Fellowship in the 1920s, vital material relating to Pickwick's origin has been lost. Does the reviewer express his regrets or outrage about this matter? He doesn't even mention it.
- ▶ More tomorrow.

April 4



- ▶ Most wedding cakes are tiered. But what inspired the tradition of tiering? The amazing Peter Stadlera, in his latest post on the historical background to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, provides the answer, and much more besides.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Mr Tilt, a bookseller at the corner of St Bride's Passage. What sounds like a harmless reference to a long gone bookseller of old turns out to be a very interesting story: Charles Tilt, afterwards Tilt and Bogue, occupied 85, Fleet Street, and a charming view of this shop appears in Cruikshank's 'Almanack' for March, 1835.



- "And this story is about plagiarism too: the first British graphic novel, *The Adventures of Mr Obadiah Oldbuck* was obviously, from the first, a plagiarism of...



- "...*Les Amours de Mr Vieux Bois* by Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846). Töpffer's original had appeared in Paris in 1837, although the Swiss schoolmaster had drawn an earlier version for the amusement of his pupils and friends ten years earlier; it was his third published book, following *Histoire de Mr. Jobot* (1833) and *Histoire de Mr. Crépín* (1837). The British edition that appeared in the autumn of 1841 was, in fact a plagiarism of a plagiarism as its engravings were based upon pirated edition published in 1839 by Gabriel Aubert (Paris, Aubert, Galerie Vero-Dodat)



Tilt's partner David Bogue was born in 1807 or 1808, of a respectable Scottish family, the nephew of Dr. David Bogue (1750-1825), the eminent Dissenting minister, author of *An Essay on the Divine Authority of the New Testament* (1801). In early life, Bogue became assistant to Mr. Thomas Ireland, bookseller, of Edinburgh, with whom he remained until 1836 when he came to London and joined the establishment of Charles Tilt. Tilt (born in 1797) was already well established, having worked at Hatchards and other bookselling businesses from the age of 14. His own publishing and bookselling business was established in 1826 at 86 Fleet Street, at the corner of St Bride's Passage. In 1840, Tilt passed over three senior employees to invite David Bogue to join him as a partner.



Thus, Tilt and Boggs became the publishing imprint for a wide range of books, many highly illustrated, on art, wild flowers, books of poems, chapbooks, railway companions and guides. After three years, Tilt sold his interest to Boggs for approximately £30, 000 and Boggs continued to publish a wide range of illustrated books and cheap cellars, although his fortunes began to decline in the mid 1840s. His chief asset was George Cruikshank whose association with Charles Tilt had begun as early as 1827 and led to the successful publication of *My Sketch Book* (1833) and the annual *Cruikshank's Comic Almanack* (1834-52). Unfortunately, the association was not always successful: the Almanack had begun well, with contributions by William Makepeace Thackeray, but suffered from the competition with its rival Punch's Almanack which began publication in 1844. Cruikshank's *Compendious Poets*, May 1841-June 1842, edited by Laman Blanchard, did not make any significant profit, and, although well known today, such sets as *The Bazaar* (1847) and *New Illustrated Children* (1848) were a complete flop at the time.



- ▶ "On his death, Charles Tilt returned to the business from which he had retired sixteen years earlier. Tilt had amassed quite a fortune and began travelling around the continent and Middle East, one trip inspiring *The Boat and the Caravan* (1847) about his tour of Egypt and Syria. In the 1850s he split his time between homes in Brighton, London and Bath. Tilt had to negotiate with various creditors and, in June 1857, the *Publishers' Circular* announced that the business had been purchased 'for a large sum' by the firm of Kent & Co. of Paternoster-row.
- ▶ Charles Tilt retired to his home in Penbridge Gardens, Baywater, where he died on 28 September 1861, leaving the considerable sum of around £180,000 to his daughter, Mrs. Jane May Gladstone.



- ▶ "Above St Andrew's Passage sits the magnificent white steeple tower of St Andrew's Church. The steeple, designed by Christopher Wren, and his tallest, was apparently the inspiration for the first tiered wedding cakes. In the passage there was, until recently, the wine bar known as The Press House. They adopted as their slogan 'Wine is bottled poetry' (Robert Louis Stevenson). I read that their Martin O', Garphame, advised that morning was always the best time to taste wine..."





April 5



- ▶ Concluding my response to the review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*...
- ▶ The reviewer says "The strongest evidence to support the view that Seymour created Pickwick is that, before *The Pickwick Papers*, he had a tendency to draw overweight, bespectacled men". This is misleading in the extreme. The effect of the statement is to make people think "Oh, is that all that Jarvis is saying? Seymour drew some fat men with glasses before *Pickwick*? So what? That's nothing." But the point is, one does not begin with these drawings. One begins with the blatant contradiction which lies at the heart of *Pickwick's* 1847 preface. A contradiction is the hardest of hard evidence. It obviously means that Dickens's statement cannot be true, and therefore an alternative origin of *Pickwick* must be sought. It is only AFTER one realises that Dickens's account is false that one turns towards Seymour's previous drawings. You don't START with the drawings of fat men.



- ▶ You can now see how sly and unscrupulous the reviewer's "paratext" argument is, which I responded to the other day. By calling the preface a "paratext", the reviewer 'relabels' a lie, so that it is no longer a lie, no longer self-contradictory. The preface is now simply part of the fictional game. And then of course, the drawings become 'the strongest evidence' and are easily dismissed, as being of no great weight.
- ▶ The reviewer then follows this up by saying: "But what does it mean to create a literary character? If Seymour draws a pudgy man in tights and garters, has he created Samuel Pickwick or a drawing of a pudgy man in tights and garters?" And obviously, one is expected to say "Oh, just a pudgy man in tights and garters."



- But the point is that *The Pickwick Papers* was not just a work of words: it was really a multi-media work, a work of words AND pictures. So the question is not really: what does it mean to create a LITERARY character, but rather what does it mean to create a multi-media character? *Mr Pickwick* is a being of both the pen and the pencil, and one cannot simply erase Seymour's role in the creation of the character.



- Seymour created what has been called "The Mona Lisa of book illustrations." In *Mr Pickwick*, he created one of the most powerful images in human history. And the visual aspect of *Mr Pickwick* was all part of the character's identity, as is the case with real human beings. Indeed, the fat stomach suggests that here is a heavy boozier and a big eater, the magnifying glass on the waistcoat suggests the investigative nature of the character, and the spectacles suggest a pseudo-intellectual who is also a bit of a fool. A great deal of *The Pickwick Papers'* contents arises just from the picture of *Mr Pickwick*. The image sets the nature of the book. Moreover, the pictures helped to make *Mr Pickwick* seem like a real person, and someone to care about. And nor is this all that Seymour contributed.



- ▶ A list of Seymour's likely input would include the three other members of the Pickwick Club, Mr Jingle, some concept of Sam Weller, Mr Stiggins, the events of the first three parts, including the sagacious dog, the arbour scene, and the cricket match, and the presence of Christmas scenes. This is a substantial contribution - it is essentially laying down the structure of *The Pickwick Papers*. And let's not forget that Dickens never had such a success as *The Pickwick Papers* again. There was something great arising from the collaboration with Seymour which Dickens never equalled.

SHAME
ON
YOU



- ▶ And this gets to the heart of the matter, and the monstrosity of what Dickens and his associates did. By fabricating the origin story of *Pickwick*, and saying that Seymour contributed nothing but “the sporting tastes of Mr Winkle”, they took away Seymour’s rightful place in history. This is what is so disgusting, and what needs to be put right.
- ▶ And this current review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* does nothing on that front. It gains a spurious authority by appearing in a scholarly journal and by using academic jargon, but, as I have shown, it should not be taken seriously. It’s a disgrace. I could say more, but I’ll end there.

April 5



- ▶ Peter's Stadler's latest post follows on from his previous one. His opening remark here is a response to Michael Segers' comment on the previous post: "Church steeples to wine bars... wow!"
- ▶ "Oh yes Michael, church steeples to a wine bar and even more. On my recent Pickwickian tour I went to St Bride's Passage and discovered that there will be a new wine bar opening up in April.



- "Besides, I saw by pure luck information on a very interesting sounding play to be performed in the Bridewell Theatre next door: *The Trials and Tribulations of Mr Pickwick* by Nigel Nevinson.



"I read about the play that 'a hat stand and a trunk, and the sound of hoof beats, set us back in Dickensian times and we enter the no longer comfortable life of Samuel Pickwick'. Furthermore is said that 'this is fluent monologue about a man who never banked on prison awaiting trial. The writing provides a safe and confident haven for Nevinson's talents as a character actor. Via minimal set, simple props (used creatively and to great comic effect) and appropriate costume, Nevinson brings *Pickwick* to life endearingly, and with poise and aplomb.'



- "Furthermore: 'The story engages through an accessible narrative. A lot of characters are portrayed and most of this is achieved with voice.' (I had to think about *The 39 Nine Steps* which I saw last year). And: 'Nevinson really comes into his own here playing accuser and defender, witness and accused, as well as storyteller.' Well, Samuel Pickwick seems to be back again and my Pickwickian Tour continues tomorrow..."

April 6



- ▶ I have just received a great piece of news from my friend Alex Jewell, on Sunday afternoon, in Nunhead Cemetery. He and his friend John Warren discovered the grave of the lesser Tom Rother, who appears in the Guffy Club scene of Death and Mr Pickwick.
- ▶ This is what Alex told me: "This discovery is important as the existing chronologies usually say he died in Bristol, whereas my research had revealed he actually died in Deddlesham, which is why I asked John Warren to pop over to Nunhead cemetery and make some enquiries. The Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (just looked him up on their website) and printed out a grave map for us and let us get on with finding it." You can see here the photo of the grave.
- ▶ This is a fantastic discovery. Tom Rother was, as Alex says on his website, "One of the most important fighters and players in the history of boxing." And I must admit, I got a little "wobbly" when Alex told me the news. In Death and Mr Pickwick, I have Tom Rother drinking in the Guffy Club, as his old boxing rival (and later Tom's friend) Jack Scroggins sings a song about the time they fought.
- ▶ "Fighting a pet in prison, and even when half groggy
Did he survive him, wasn't out the lights of boxing!"
- ▶ Moreover, I have further evidence the blue jacket with 'DC' on the buttons...the clothing of the Paphos Club, which later became the model for the jacket of the Frodo Club. So this is brilliant news. Many congratulations to Alex and John!

April 6



- ▶ Peter Stadlera is in London, strolling with *Death and Mr Pickwick*...
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Cheapside and the St Mary-le-Bow Church, which is famous for its chimes. Come walking with me and get some visual impressions of that location, on my Pickwickian Tour.



- ▶ "According to tradition a true Cockney must be born within earshot of the sound of Bow Bells. Since the early 1940s, a recording of the Bow Bells made in 1926 has been used by the BBC World Service as an interval signal for the English-language broadcasts. It is still used today preceding some English-language broadcasts.



- ▶ "And in the churchyard is a statue of Captain John Smith of Jamestown, founder of Virginia and former parishoner of the church. The statue is made of bronze and stands on a Portland stone plinth. As you can see, it shows Smith dressed in Elizabethan fashion with a sword in his left hand and a book in his right. The statue is a copy by Charles Kemck of a sculpture by the American William Couper which stands in Jamestown. It was erected in 1990 and unveiled by the Jamestown Foundation of Commonwealth of Virginia, who presented it to the City of London. It was erected to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the return of Smith to England in the winter of 1609-10. Captain John Smith was a passenger of the three ships of colonists sailing for America in 1607. Smith was elected president of the newly founded colony in America due to his ability to deal with the Indians. On one occasion his life was saved by the Indian chief's daughter Pocahontas. Stay tuned for more stroller's tales..."

April 7



- ▶ Yesterday, I posted about the amazing discovery of losing legend John Lecher's grave by Alex Jansides and John Skerton. Alex has also informed of another extraordinary discovery he has made. If I had known about this when I was writing Death and Mr. Pickwick, it would certainly have led to a re-write of this section dealing with the Pickwick farcurest, *Life in London*.
- ▶ Alex has discovered that the true originator of *Life in London* was the artist Robert Crankshank. The incredible thing is that this was glaring everybody in the face! But, as far as I am aware, it has never been pointed out before. Everyone, including myself, seems to have missed the evidence, apart from Alex. Perhaps the reason is that people tend to focus on Robert Crankshank's more famous brother, George Crankshank; another possible reason is that the evidence appears in the second volume of the *Life in London* series, *The First of the Adventures of Life in London*, which is not as well-known as the first.
- ▶ Anyway, you can see here the frontispiece and title page of *The First*...



- But look at this picture, which occupies the lower section of the frontispiece. In the writing, Pierce Egan has added the words: "The play Rob Crusoe, Original suggestion and artist of the 2nd Vol, Aldous" (Egan, and you'll see it.)
- Aldous says: "There are a couple of other pieces of evidence that Rob Crusoe was the progenitor of *Late in London*, but this is the one that pretty much proves it beyond a shadow of doubt." And Aldous continues: "Basically, what I'm trying to say is that it's becoming very clear that the relationship that existed between publishers, writers and book illustrators is much more complex than those so-called academics and Dickensian scholars seem to realize. Robert Cranshaw came up with the idea for *Late in London*. But unlike the situation between Dickens and Seymour, Egan never denied it."
- I think this is hugely important. And compare and contrast this to the truly disgraceful review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which has just appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*, where (as I mentioned in my response to the review) the reviewer has tried to rebrand Dickens's class using the academic jargon of "paradox".
- Brilliant work, Aldous!

April 7



- ▶ Recently, I posted about my visit to the Maggie and Stump pub, near the Old Bailey, where in times gone by people would gather to watch executions at Newgate Prison. Well, here is a fascinating post by Peter Stadlera on the prison.
- ▶ Peter Stadlera: "Today we go - together with *Death and Mr Pickwick* as our travel companion - to the notorious Newgate Prison and have a look at the Newgate Execution Bell."



- "For over 600 years the prison was renowned for its appalling conditions. It was said that the prison was so dirty and squalid that the floors crunched as you walked due to all of the lice and bedbugs. The women's area was equally appalling, crowded with half naked women: drunk, sometimes deranged, in leg irons and often with their children in tow.



- "The Central Criminal Court (a.k.a. the Old Bailey) now stands on the site of the old Newgate Prison.





- ▶ "However, if you venture around the back of Amen Court you will find something quite spectacular: the only surviving wall of Newgate Prison!"





- ▶ "From 1605 the church of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate also had a rather ghoul-ish part to play in the executions. At midnight on the eve of an execution, a bellman would walk along the prison tunnels ringing 'twelve solemn tolls with double strokes' on his handbell whilst chanting 'All you that in the condemned hold do lie/ Prepare you, for tomorrow you shall die/ Watch all and pray, the hour is drawing near/ That you before the Almighty must appear/ Examine well yourselves, in time repent/ That you may not to eternal flames be sent/ And when St. Sepulchre's bell tomorrow tolls/ The Lord above have mercy on your souls.'





- ▶ "Although Newgate Prison has long gone, the Newgate Execution Bell still exists and is housed in the Church of St Sepulchre."

April 7



- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes has just found that *Death and Mr Pickwick* is mentioned on the website of Kennedy's fish and chip restaurant.
- ▶ <https://kennedyslondon.co.uk/>
- ▶ Great find, Frank!
- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes: "It's not often that a modern novel (or any novel for that matter) gets a mention on a restaurant website. *Death and Mr Pickwick* will be published in paperback this year and will undoubtedly attract more discerning readers in its quest to challenge the perceived origins of *The Pickwick Papers*." (See the next page for what the restaurant says.)



- Kennedy's: "Our friendly and cost-effective fish and chips restaurants in central London are inspired by the Kennedy's brand established 150 years ago as a traditional delicatessen butcher's, originally renowned for their sea-slops. We have maintained the tradition whilst expanding our menu with British food. We serve fresh fish from British waters and as such our seafood is of the utmost quality. Our traditional freshly baked pies are made from two ingredients and are a popular choice with our diners. We have two locations in the city based in Goswell Road and Whitecross Street, distinguishing us as one of the best situated places to eat in the capital."
- Kennedy's also has many associations with historical figures, including a plaque honouring James Bayle (founder of the Radical club July 1831) (Whitecross Street, London, UK). Furthermore, Goswell Road used to be known as Goswell Street, where Mr Pickwick, the hero of *The Pickwick Papers* lived. As a result of the huge success of *The Pickwick Papers*, Goswell Street became the most famous street in the world. The story behind the creation of *The Pickwick Papers* is told in the novel *Smith and Mr Pickwick* by Stephen Jarvis who regularly visits us.
- Additionally, Kennedy's caters for coach parties and private hire, so do not hesitate to enquire about booking a reservation with us.

April 7



- ▶ Following on from yesterday's post about Alex Joanides' discovery of Tom Belcher's grave, Luke G. Williams, the author of the great book *Richmond Unchained*, who has been a guest-poster on this facebook page, has just written this article about Alex's discovery for *The Peckham Peculiar*. Towards the end, Luke mentions Belcher's appearance in DaMP.

Famous boxer's grave discovered in Nunhead Cemetery



Pictured above: Tom Sayers

- But say the finds of a fresh slab at Nunhead Cemetery is the latest bout of the pugilist mystery: a rare and notable rebuff of the famous burial ground has been discovered thanks to research conducted by boxing historians Alan Jackson and John Murray.
- On a visit to the cemetery on April 3, Alan and John were able to discover the long lost grave of Tom Sayers (1833-1894) – one of the most famous boxers from the “golden age” of English bare-knuckle pugilism in the heyday of the 19th century.
- It has long been assumed an English father (boxing history books that Sayers died and was buried in the mid 1870s. However recent research has revealed that he had not the last years of his life as a resident of number 75 Colville Square, Peckham, prior to his death and burial in Nunhead. English Square was a well-to-do residential area of all modern day Commercial Way – so it was that Sayers is “Peckham Man Sayer”.
- “Tom Sayers is one of the most important fighters and players in the history of boxing and it is a shame to provide no marker to commemorate his great fight and life,” says Henry Chamberlain, also an ex to the Friends of Nunhead Cemetery. “Our mission is to ensure as far as we can that the stone and cemetery ground plans and old and new maps.
- “The inscription of the grave is only legible in certain places with other parts of the stone completely missing. However, we were able to clearly make out the names of at least three new members of the Sayers family buried to the east.”



Forest shows how B&B's power (Hawthorn, Ontario)

- Born in 1783, Tim Bletcher was the son of the great loggers, arguably the greatest logger of the "golden age" period. Although I am never to-date chairman of England, the J&B, he was nevertheless representative of the most able logger in the land. The legendary logging songs of the time, Henry J&B, was it of him that "his point of strength of spiritual and scientific perfection ... Tim Bletcher was people, clouds around?"
- During the first 30 years of the 19th century, logging was the most popular sport in England and its leading players belonged to the most famous men in the country. A message of that time and place is, with Bletcher, and the spirit of logging as a whole, were told in demonstrated by the fact that he was one of the 18 famous loggers who were selected by King George IV to act as officers of the new research operation in 1801, before moving to "country life" in the late 1800s. Bletcher was also the author of the famous "The Forest of Bletcher" for 14 years.
- Bletcher's connection as a major figure from English colonial logging history has been acknowledged through his inclusion as a character in the historical 2001 novel *Forest and Mr. Pickings* by Stephen James, which examines the connections between The Pickings Papers and various forms of cultural, sporting and literary history.
- Bletcher is not the only one mentioned in Hawthorn's connection to the game of the forest, (although) in England, around 1800 and around 1800, "J&B" (and 1800) 1810, can also be found in the grounds.

April 8



- I recently met up with Peter Stadlera at the Hung, Drawn and Quartered pub in London. As you can see, our day began with a light lunch.





- The Hung, Drawn and Quartered is not of Pickwickian interest in its own right, but it's not far from the street called Crutched Friars, which most definitely is. (The street takes its name from an order of mendicant friars, the "Fratres Crucifer", who settled in the area in 1249.)



- The street has a connection to my posts of the last two days, which featured Alex Joannides' discoveries about Tom Belcher and Pierce Egan. The Daffy Club scene in my book, in which Belcher and Egan appear, takes place at the Castle Tavern, but there is a person present called Peter Pidgeon, who was the landlord of the Horse and Trumpeter pub - and that pub was where the Aldgate Branch of the Daffy Club held their meetings. The pub, long gone, was at 1 Crutched Friars, but you can see me here standing at the location.



- ▶ Alex has also managed to find some older photos of Crutched Friars - these date from 1912 - and hopefully they give a better idea of what the club members would have seen as they staggered away from their drinking sessions. (Though perhaps the photos should be blurred to capture the full effect of their visual field...)
- ▶ More on my meeting with Peter tomorrow.



April 8



- ▶ In this post, Peter Stadler takes a look at Dickens's first book, *Sketches by Boz*. I enjoyed *Sketches* very much, just as Peter did. But the especially fascinating thing in Peter's post is the photo showing the 'Yorkshire Relish' edition of *Sketches*. Readers of DaMP will recall that I mention the 'Yorkshire Relish' edition of *Pickwick*, produced by the manufacturers of Yorkshire Relish sauce. (This brown sauce is still made today, although it is now called 'YR Sauce'. It is apparently very popular in parts of Ireland, though I have never seen it on sale in the UK. I wish it WERE on sale though - Elaine bought a bottle in an Irish shop in New York, and it is REALLY yummy.) I had no idea that there was a Yorkshire Relish edition of *Sketches by Boz*, though, and so this is a great find by Peter.



- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we have many references to Charles Dickens' first novel *The Pickwick Papers*. But what about his first book *Sketches by Boz*? Over the last weeks I've read this 800+ pages volume and really enjoyed it: *The Scenes, The Characters, The Tales, Sketches of Young Gentlemen and Young Couples*. Many fascinating characters, funny stories and interesting locations all told with much irony and punch.



► "The collection was first published by John Macrone in February 1836 and was later expanded and issued in monthly parts (Nov 1837-June 1839) by Dickens' next publishers, Chapman and Hall. Illustrations for all of the versions were provided by George Cruikshank. The Sketches provide delightful glimpses into life in early Victorian London. You visit Jutley's, go to the Vauxhall Gardens, have a look at Newgate Prison, walk around Seven Dials. Dickens later wrote of *Sketches*: 'They comprise my first attempts at authorship. I am conscious of their often being extremely crude and ill-considered, and bearing obvious marks of haste and inexperience.' I think the contrary is right: Dickens's narration is full of vigour and passion, with the eye for the scene. Especially if you know *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick* it's an absolute must-read. By the way Dickens pseudonym Boz came from his younger brother Augustus through-the-nose pronunciation of his own nickname, *Roses*.



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Page 101.



THE LAST CARRIAGE, (from "Sketches by Boz")
London: 1836, 24 p.

- "Below is modern-day Seven Dials, one of the places featured in *Sketches by Boz*."



April 9



- ▶ Continuing the account of my day with Peter Stadlera...
- ▶ As you know, historical research always builds up a thirst in me, so Peter and I stopped in the Old Red Cow pub, near Barbican tube station.



- Not far away, though, was the reason for our being in this part of London: I recently discovered that there is a building, Seddon House, which is named after the furniture manufacturer, George Seddon, for whom Seymour's father worked, as featured at the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- ▶ What's more, nearby is London House, which was the location of Seddon's furniture factory. As you can see, there is a plaque which states that the building was devastated by fire in 1788. There were in fact several fires at the building, including one in 1790, and it is not clear why the plaque only commemorates one. Fire at this building is mentioned by the bagman near the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*: "Seddon - the man in charge - he's worth a fortune. Lost a bit in a fire, I hear, but didn't stop him. When he passes it all on to his sons, they'll have a lot to thank their father for."
- ▶ This remark plays upon the mind of Seymour's father, and stokes up his own ambitions, with the result that he goes to London, and thereby makes sure that Robert Seymour is raised as a Londoner.
- ▶ More historical research tomorrow...



April 9



- ▶ Peter Stadlera now posts about a London pub with a Pickwickian name...
- ▶ "In Bath we went to the famous Pickwickian pub The Saracen's Head. In London there was another Saracen's Head, once a celebrated tavern and coaching establishment, which stood on the north side of Snow Hill, 'without Newgate.'



- "It was mentioned in 1522 as an inn with 30 beds and stalls for four horses, but was demolished to make way for the Holborn Viaduct and its approaches in 1868. Dickens himself wrote in *Nicolas Nickleby*: "Near to the jail, and by consequence near to Smithfield . . . and on that particular part of Snow Hill, where omnibus horses going eastward seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westward not unfrequently fall by accident, is the coachyard of the Saracen's Head Inn; its portal guarded by two Saracens' heads and shoulders . . . frowning upon you from each side of the gateway. The Inn itself, garnished with another Saracen's head, frowns upon you from the top of the yard."

Saratoga's Head,
SNOW HILL.

For Carriages and Waggon
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W. J. MOUNTAIN & Co.

will accept for any article re-
specting the value of £5. of both
before, and enough of the former
days or delivery, unless a record
is kept, and paid for.

Looking

Carriage

Parcels

Thomas Mountain, Faversham.





- "Today you see police lanterns in parapets over side elevations as it is home to the City of London police station in Snow Hill. Stay tuned for further points of interest on our *Death and Mr Pickwick* Tour!"

April 10



► A meal...



- ...a plaque...



► ...a pint...



- ...a cat. All elements of the finale to my recent meeting with Peter Stadlera. Let's take the pint first...



- This was in the Lord Raglan public house - a pub which connects to yesterday's post about George Seddon, the furniture maker who employed Seymour's father. As you will recall, at the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, when Seymour's father was trying to make friends with the upholsterers of Seddon's, they sent him on a wild goose chase, of various pubs. One of those pubs, the Mourning Bush, survives to this day, though it is now known as the Lord Raglan.



- ▶ And the Lord Raglan is opposite one of the most extraordinary places in London, Postman's Park, which features in the movie *Clash*, starring Julia Rogers. The park has an array of plaques commemorating those who lost their lives trying to save others. And the park has personal *Pickwickian* significance: because it was here, a few years ago, that I met the *Pickwick* expert Professor Bob Patten. This was prior to going for a drink in nearby Gresham Street...which used to be called Cateaton Street...a street which was mentioned in the prospectus for *The Pickwick Papers*. I can remember telling Bob about the part in *Death and Mr Pickwick* where Dickens refers to the exact spot in Kent where Mr Pickwick dropped a whip - which turned out to be crucial evidence that Seymour had been to the spot prior to his involvement with Dickens.



- Afterwards, we headed for the Brick Lane area of London, as we had booked a table at the Muhib restaurant.



- ▶ However, after our chicken tikka masalas, we just had to visit the Pride of Spitalfields pub, where there is a resident cat. Why did we go there? Well, in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, the alcoholic clown J S Grimaldi wanders around in a drunken haze, roughly in this part of London, and he ends up in an unidentified back street pub, where he starts babbling about a "cat's meat man" - that is, a supplier of cat food. The fact that The Pride of Spitalfields has a resident cat would have been reason enough to visit the pub, as an "echo" of J S Grimaldi, but there was added significance when I discovered that one of the pub's nineteenth-century clients was a certain James Hardiman - a Jack the Ripper suspect... who was also a cat's meat man!



- The slight blurriness of this cat picture is of course deliberate...suggesting Grimaldi's befuddled state of mind...



April 10



- ▶ This post by Peter Stadlera provides important background material for *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I had no idea that the Foundling Hospital was effectively the first public art gallery in Britain and also that it was an important stage on the road to the Royal Academy - and of course Seymour exhibited at the Academy, and then had a painting rejected. And do check out the photo of the matron's mallet!
- ▶ "We will have a walk through the Foundling Museum today with many impressions (pictures) I got there."



- ▶ "Captain Thomas Coram retired to Rotherhithe in 1719 after achieving success in the New World, establishing a shipwright's business in Boston, and later in Taunton, Massachusetts. After numerous attempts at presenting the King with petitions which emphasised not only Coram's compassion for the children but also concern for their subsequent education into useful citizens, subscriptions poured in and on 17 October 1739 the King signed a Royal Charter. The Governors and Guardians of this new enterprise met to receive the Charter on 20th November 1739 at Somerset House. The group included many of the important figures of the day. The aristocracy was represented by dukes and earls; magnates and merchant bankers represented the financial world and men of standing included Dr Richard Mead (the foremost physician), the artist William Hogarth and Captain Coram himself.



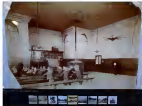
- "Thus the Foundling Hospital was established for the 'education and maintenance of exposed and deserted young children'. This institution, described as 'the most imposing single monument erected by eighteenth century benevolence', caught the public imagination and became London's most popular charity.



William Hogarth, who was children, had a long association with the Hospital and was a founding Governor. He designed the children's uniforms, the Coat of Arms, he was an inspector for Westminsters, and he and his wife Jane fostered founding children. Hogarth also decorated the walls of the hospital with works of art donated by contemporary British artists - the Governors being unwilling to spend money on such ornaments. His example inspired many other contemporary British artists to donate works to this pioneering and philanthropic institution. At this time Britain had no public places for artists to exhibit their works and the Foundling Hospital provided what was in fact the first contemporary gallery of British art. The artists involved with the Hospital were made governors by recognition of their generosity and started to meet them on an annual basis. The idea of exhibiting exhibitions of art under the aegis of a national academy has much debated by the artist, governors and is a key episode in the development of a structure that led to the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768. George Frederic Handel also supported the Hospital's charitable work by giving benefit performances of his work in the Chapel. May I end as we will continue our tour tomorrow.







April 10



- ▶ Andrew Kirschner, of the Philadelphia Pickwick Club, has just posted about his wine cellar. The 'Mr Pickwick' he mentions is a former Chairman of the Club, as all members take on a name of a character in *The Pickwick Papers*.
- ▶ "Just organizing the cellar at 'Chez What North'. It's all Port of varying vintages except for 3 bottles: One is a bottle of cask-strength Scotch bottled in honor of my friend and former Mr. Pickwick, the late Michael Harwood - who gave me my first glass of vintage Port when I was 18 years old..."



- "The other two are bottles of Sloe Gin compounded by Charles Dicken's great-grandson, Cedric Dickens. The bottles are inscribed 'These are the best, strongest and last bottles I will ever make.' Anybody know anything about Sloe Gin? Will it keep indefinitely in a sealed bottle? Should I drink it?"



April 11



- ▶ I have mentioned before that, when I was a kid, I used to read loads of superhero comics, and that this was probably one of the reasons I ended up writing about an illustrator as an adult. When I posted about comic books on that previous occasion, I chose, to represent my fascination, the comic book story *Flash of Two Worlds* which made a big impact on me, as a kid - and chance googling the other day led me to discover a bizarre connection between this story and Charles Dickens. Let me explain.
- ▶ In the 1940s, DC Comics introduced the first incarnation of the super-speeding hero The Flash, as shown on the right of this picture. When superheroes fell out of fashion in the late 1940s, the company dropped the character - but in the 1950s, they revived The Flash, with a new costume and a new identity, as shown on the left of the picture. But then, in 1961, DC brought the two Flasches together: it was explained that the 1940s Flash had operated on a parallel world from the 1960s Flash - hence the *Flash of Two Worlds* story...



- ▶ And one of the villains in this comic book was called The Shade, the somberly-dressed character in this pic, who could manipulate shadows.
- ▶ Well, DC used the idea of parallel worlds extensively after *Flash of Two Worlds*, and they brought back many other heroes who had been dropped in the 1940s. The whole thing got very complicated, with different sets of heroes, from these (and other) parallel worlds, operating separately, but sometimes meeting up. And so, in the mid-1980s, DC decided to simplify everything with a storyline about a cosmic crisis which merged all parallel worlds into one. And, as history was altered in the merged earth that resulted, DC had the golden opportunity of revamping the biographies of all their heroes and villains.



- ▶ There have been more universe-redefining crises on subsequent occasions, and further revamped biographies. And biography-revamping happened to The Shade.
- ▶ So, in 1994, in the comic book shown, The Shade was reinvented as a morally-ambiguous Victorian era immortal. And who should be one of his friends?



- Why, none other than the young Charles Dickens, of course! The story shown takes place in 1838 - and, as you can see, Dickens refers to The Shade as his 'old friend', and that he had been looking for The Shade for several weeks. So the likelihood is that The Shade knew Dickens in the very period, from 1836 to 1837, when the author was working on *The Pickwick Papers*!

April 11



- ▶ Peter Stollers continues his exploration of the Founding Museum.
- ▶ "Today we shall continue our tour through the Founding museum with a focus on paintings, art and Dickens."





- ▶ "Charles Dickens grew up near the Foundling Hospital, as it was originally known, and was a supporter of Thomas Coram's home for abandoned and destitute children.



- ▶ "He was so moved by the stories of the children helped by Coram that he raised funds and wrote about the Foundling Hospital in some of his most famous works. Dickens wrote of the Hospital: 'Nineteen years after good Captain Coram's heart had been so touched by the exposure of children, living, dying, and dead, in his daily walks, one wing of the existing building was completed and admission given to the first score of little blanks (foundling children).' Dickens raised awareness of the Foundling Hospital through his work.



The 1837 Dickens moved to Doughty Street, near to the Foundling Hospital, where he would go for regular walks through the grounds. There he wrote Oliver Twist, about an orphan boy, or 'Foundling', as children with no parents to-care for them were known. The book also portrays the character John Brownlow, probably named after the Hospital Secretary at the time, who had himself grown up in its care. Dickens rented a grave in the Hospital Chapel, a vital source of income for the school, and this may have been how he met Brownlow, who collected the poor rents. In Little Dorrit, the character Tattlersham grows up in the Foundling Hospital. And in his play No Thoroughfare, written in 1847, the character Walter Swick grows up in the Hospital's care before being reclaimed. Like Thomas Coram, Dickens was appalled by child poverty, and campaigned against social injustice. He even set up his own charity for destitute women, many of whom would have no action but no living their child to the Foundling Hospital to be brought up. Dickens featured the Foundling Hospital most prominently in an article called *Rescuees*, a Mass Club for the journal *Household Words* in 1851. The poignant title was taken from the entry form of the children who entered the Foundling Hospital, which included a space for the child's parent: 'Somewhere well, contented, our tour through the Foundling Museum and meet my wife in a red coat... May I send?'





April 12



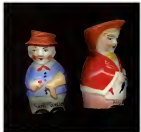
- Generally, on this facebook page, I do not refer to Dickens's characters unless they appear in *The Pickwick Papers*. Mrs Gamp, though, would be one of the few exceptions to this rule because she gets a brief, but important, mention in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. In my novel, I suggest that Mrs Gamp's imaginary friend, Mrs Harris, inspired the John Foster fraud, whereby a friend of Edward Chapman was simply conjured into existence, as the "original" of Mr Pickwick, in order to take away credit from Robert Seymour. And the first picture here, drawn by the cartoonist Vicky in 1952, shows a "meeting" between Mrs Gamp and the illusory Mrs Harris.



- And looking online, I discovered a few pieces of Pickwickiana in which Mrs Gamp is linked to characters from *The Pickwick Papers*. So, as you can see, there are bookends featuring Mrs Gamp alongside Mr Pickwick...



► ...and also Tony Weller...



- ...as well as Sam Weller and Mrs Gamp salt and pepper shakers.



- And I also came across one fascinating piece of solo Gampiana, which I felt I had to post: a cigarette-card showing how to make a shadow-puppet version of the character!

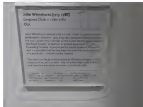


- And the last picture shows Vicky himself, whose real name was Victor Weisz. There is a sombre reason for posting this image - because Vicky, like Seymour, was a cartoonist who killed himself. In 1966, Vicky took an overdose of sleeping pills. The previous day, he had submitted a cartoon of the British politician Denis Healey, which would be used on the cover of *New Statesman* magazine - the same issue that would carry his obituary.

April 12



- ▶ Here is the third in Peter Stadlera's series of posts about the Foundling Museum. These posts have really opened my eyes - I had no idea that the Foundling Museum had such riches, and that, by encouraging the idea of public art galleries, it forms part of the historical background to *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Well done, Peter!
- ▶ "To end our *Death and Mr Pickwick* Tour of the Foundling Museum we will have a look at some fantastic clocks exhibited there (have Pink Floyd's song *Time in your mind* and listen to them striking).









- ▶ "And here is my wife Edda posing in a lovely red Admiral Nelson coat in front of the Battle of Trafalgar
- ▶ (I also had to think about Stephen posing in front of a Nelson statue holding Death and Air Picnic in his hand.)





- ▶ "Also, here is The Court Room where the Foundling Hospital's Court of Governors used to meet. The room is a rococo ensemble of paintings, furniture and interior architecture, designed to make the best possible impression on all future potential governors and donors. The ceiling is a plaster work by William Wilton and the paintings include Hogarth's *Moses before Pharaoh's Daughter* and Gainsborough's picture of London's Charter House.



April 13



- ▶ The day before yesterday, I posted about comic books; yesterday, I mentioned in passing the way that Dickens and his associates took away credit from Robert Seymour in the creation of Pickwick. Today's post combines both of those topics.
- ▶ You will see here part of the credits for the movie out now, *Superman V Batman: Dawn of Justice*. The significant thing to notice is that the creation of Batman is credited to Bob Kane WITH Bill Finger - and Finger's name appears in the credits for the first time. That "with" represents the culmination of a campaign to get Finger, a writer, acknowledged as co-creator of Batman with Kane, the first Batman comic book artist. I have briefly mentioned Finger on a previous occasion, because his case has always struck me as somewhat analogous to Seymour's, but the new credit for Finger in the movie made me take a fresh look at some of the material online about the creation of Batman.



Bill Finger

BILL FINGER

Co-creator of Batman

(Born: February 8, 1914, Bronx, New York
Died: January 12, 1997, Woodbury, New York
Also known as: "The Invisible Man")

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Place of Birth: Bronx, New York, New York

Other Names: "The Invisible Man", "The Man Who Created Batman"

Years of Activity: 1939-1997

Years of Activity: 1939-1997

Years of Activity: 1939-1997

Years of Activity: 1939-1997

- Kane died in a manner similar to the way that Dickens did, in the 1947 preface to *The Pickwick Papers*. Finger created or co-created many aspects of Batman, including Bruce Wayne's tragic backstory, Gotham City, the Batmobile, the Batcave, Commissioner Gordon, and villains such as the Joker and the Penguin - and indeed Finger wrote hundreds of Batman stories, including the very first story. Even Batman's costume was modified as a result of Finger's suggestions, to include the famous bat-eared cowl and a cloak instead of the stiff bat wings that Kane had originally drawn. Yet none of this was acknowledged. It is believed that Kane struck a deal with DC Comics to give him sole credit for the character.



- In the 1960s, rumour started to emerge that Finger had played a major role in the creation of Batman - just as rumours emerged about Seymour's role in creating Pickwick in the 1830s. Kane's response was to make a public statement: "I'd like to emphatically set the record straight," he declared in 1966, "once and for all, about the many myths and conjectures that I read about myself and my creation, Batman." This is somewhat akin to what Dickens said in his preface: "In the course of the last dozen years I have seen various accounts of the origin of these Pickwick Papers, which have at all events possessed - for me - the charm of perfect novelty."
- In some respects, Kane was even bolder in his lies than Dickens. "I, Bob Kane, am the sole creator of Batman," he stated and, at one point, he even published a comic strip which gave an entirely spurious account of the origin of Batman, as you can see







- Only in 1989, when Finger had been dead for fifteen years, did Kane soften his position a little, when, in his autobiography *Batman and Me*, he described Finger as "a contributing force" on the series, and admitted that Finger "never received the fame and recognition that he deserved." But when Kane himself died in 1998, the headstone on his grave acknowledged another co-creator - God, who bestowed on Kane the gift of Batman, with Kane allegedly sharing all of Batman's traits: "Bob Kane, Bruce Wayne, Batman - they are one and the same," the inscription proclaimed.

April 13



- ▶ In his latest post, Peter Stadler starts at a pub with a Pickwickian name... discusses Dick Turpin and the novel *Rookwood* (which I have mentioned in previous posts - it was a hugely successful novel prior to *Pickwick*)... and finishes at the Cittle of Yorke pub, which is actually right next door to where the Daffy Club used to meet, in the long-gone Castle Tavern. Great post, Peter!
- ▶ "A Death and Mr Pickwick Tour gets you quite thirsty, especially after a long tour through the Foundling Museum. So why not enter a pub or two with a historic background?"



- "The White Hart (191 Drury Lane, WC2) boldly claims to be 'the oldest licensed premises in London' and reputedly dates back to 1216. It was known as a watering-hole for London's notorious highwaymen and rogues.

THE GENUINE &
HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE
OF
RICHARD TURPIN,
The most Famous Highwayman.

Whereof several Copies are kept in Store, and may be seen
at John Bland's, at London, April 1. 1729.

By the same Author, published in the Year 1728, a second Edition of the same History, with many Additions, and a new Preface, in which the Author's Reasons for publishing this second Edition are fully explained. The same is now sold at John Bland's, at London, April 1. 1729.

The Author's Name is not printed on the Title, and appears
scarcely in the Dedication, but in the first Page of the
Book, and in the Title of the second Edition.

Printed by J. Bland, at the Sign of the White Hart, in St. Dun-
stons Church-yard, near St. Dunstons Church, in London.

- "One of these notorious highwaymen was regular customer Richard (Dick) Turpin whose life later ended in execution for horse theft. The spurious legend of Dick Turpin was established in 1739 with the book *Life of Richard Turpin* and sealed with the novel *Rookwood* (1834) by Harrison Ainsworth in which the highwayman 'Dauntless Dick Turpin' with his horse Black Bess is a secondary character. Well, The White Hart has a colorful past and some good cider.





- "Later on, I went to the Cattle of York (22 High Holborn, WC1). A pub has been on this Holborn site since 1430.



"It is housed in an atmospheric Grade II listed building with stone floors, a high-ceilinged main bar and small, dark alcoves, old wine barrels and a faux Tudor facade, mixing elements of the old and new. Several features catch the eye, including the cosy booths along the east wall (usually taken by lawyers from the adjoining Gray's Inn), wooden beam ceiling, and the great iron fireplace in the centre of the room – noted as a bit of a mystery as far back as 1962 in Geoffrey Fletcher's *The London Nobody Knows*. Many people know this place today, and it's often standing-room-only in the main bar.

It's famous for its long bar called Henekay's, the former name of this pub in the 1970's, and part of the same-named bar chain. Sam Smith's gave it the name Critic of York when it acquired Henekay's, naming it after a long-demolished pub nearby. Cheers!"

April 14



- Last week, I posted about Alex Joanides' discovery that the artist Robert Cruikshank was the originator of the *Pickwick* forerunner *Life in London*. One relic of *Life in London* is the Tom & Jerry cocktail, invented by Pierce Egan, and named after two of the characters in *Life in London*. I have known about the cocktail for some time - it's a sort of eggnog - and indeed, I sampled the cocktail for the DaWP facebook page.



- ▶ Nowadays, though, the Tom & Jerry is virtually unknown in the UK. However, Tom & Jerry cocktails were apparently very fashionable in the USA in the 1930s and 1940s - with the result that many specialised Tom & Jerry mugs and punchbowls were produced, which turn up on ebay and other auction sites, as you can see from the pics I have posted.













- And it seems the drink is still drunk, to a degree, in parts of the USA, and one can even buy pre-made Tom & Jerry mixes and batters. Perhaps American DaMP fans could give me a better idea of how well-known the drink is in modern America?





- The Wikipedia page gives the impression that the drink is not well-known and in decline – the last ‘Popular Culture’ reference it gives to the drink is the 1960 movie *The Apartment*, in which the Jack Lemmon character says ‘The Tom & Jerry mix is in the refrigerator’





- ▶ I find it a slightly amusing thought, though, that people raising a genteel mug of Tam B. Jerry to their lips in today's USA will almost certainly not realise that the drink has its origins in the debauched heavy drinking world of Pierce Egan, the Cruikshank brothers and Lyte in London!



April 14



- ▶ Here is a beautiful post by Peter Stadlers on Dr Johnson's cat.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickens* we read about Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). But in this post we shall (upon Sir Peltz's request) fully concentrate on Hodge.
- ▶ Number 17 Gough Square, London, was the home of Dr Samuel Johnson, which he shared with his much loved cat, Hodge.
- ▶ Not many cats have a statue erected in their honour, but opposite the house, which is now a museum, stands a charming bronze of this famous eighteenth century feline. Dr Johnson lived in the house for eleven years, and it was here that he produced the dictionary for which he is famous. Like many writers, he had a fondness for cats. Hodge would have kept him company as he laboured on his mammoth task for years on end.



- ▶ "The book produced by Dictionary Johnson, as he became known, defines The Cat thus:
- ▶ "A domestic animal that catches mice, commonly reckoned by naturalists the lowest order of the feline species."
- ▶ While naturalists may have reckoned the cat a lowly animal, there is no doubt that the biographer had a high regard for his feline friend, for he is recorded as describing Hodge as a "very fine cat indeed." Samuel Johnson's affection for cats in general and Hodge in particular, was recorded by his biographer, Helen Boswell, whose book, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* was published in 1792. In it we learn that the great man of letters objected to his wife buying one of his cats (a preference to Hodge) because she set a bad example to the servants.
- ▶ As a non-cat person himself, Boswell was much surprised at the "indulgence with which he treated Hodge". Dr Johnson had such a high regard for his cat it is quite possible if the technology allowed he would have partners in phone and internet about the status of his feline. He would go out himself to purchase owners for the cat. Apparently he did this in case the servants became resentful about doing so and took a dislike to the poor creature.



- "Boswell also writes that he recalled seeing Hodge scrambling up Dr Johnson's breast, apparently with much satisfaction, while the Doctor rubbed the cat's back and gently tugged his tail. To his credit, far a non-cattowner, Boswell remarked that Hodge was a fine cat, to which Dr Johnson replied "Why yes, Dr, but I have had cats whom I liked better than this." However, upon observing that his poor cat seemed put out, added, "But he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed." Boswell does not tell us exactly when Hodge passed away, but we do know that Dr Johnson went out to find some valerian (a plant very similar to catnip) when his cat was dying to make his last hours as pleasant as possible.

- It is not only in Boswell's biography that Hodge lives on. The poet Perceval Shelton wrote And typy on the Death of Dr Johnson's Favorite Cat,, from which we learn that Hodge was a black cat:

- Woe, by his master when conveyed
Wearing his gratitude expressed,
And never failed his thanks to pay
Whenever he stroked his sable fur;



- ▶ "A more recent memorial exists in the form of a bronze life-size statue that was unveiled on 26 September 1997, by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Roger Cook. The metal moggie is cat upon a daisiary with oysters at his feet. The delightful edifice was the work of animal sculptor, Jon Buckley, and was modelled on his own cat, Henry. Not much is known about Dr Johnson's other cats except that in a letter written in 1738, he mentions a white kitten by the name of Lily, describing her as very well behaved. On 1st September 1997, No 17 Gough Square acquired a new feline resident, also named Lily. She was chosen from the many cats at the Dogs' Home Battersea. However, apart from her name and place of residence, the modern day Lily has little in common with her 18th-century namesake - the present day Lily is jet black, and is decidedly mischievous. It is good to know that the great writer whose once again knows the soft footfall of a cat about the place, and one suspects that if he could see her, the Doctor would declare that she, too, is 'a very fine cat indeed!'



- "Sir Pelzi is purring enthusiastically about this fantastic feline, but is a bit jealous that Edda and I hugged the statue."

April 15

The Pickwickian Pads of Hopper



- The *Pickwick Papers* has a lot to do with the joy of eating. Of course, one can still love food, and not go as far as Mr Pickwick, and perhaps a good way of introducing today's post is to show a picture of a "fat suit" worn by a rather thin American actor, De Wolf Hopper, who played Mr Pickwick on stage in 1903 - note the dotted lines which show "where Hopper leaves off."



- Towards the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, in one of the modern-day sections of the novel, I mention two TV series which also express a love of food on "gobbling roadtrips": *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives* and *Mon V Food*. I have always thought that the eating establishments featured in these shows could be great places for North American DaMP fans to visit - I would love people to send me pictures of themselves in these establishments, accompanied by the novel, or at least with an image of DaMP's jacket on a phone or laptop screen.



- And it's very easy to find the nearest place to your location featured on the shows: if you go to <http://www.tvfoodmaps.com/> you can find restaurants which have appeared on TV food shows in your location, and if you click on the "TV Shows" tab you can find all those which have turned up on *Diners*, *Drive-ins* and *Dives* and *Man V Food*.



- ▶ Well, recently my wife Elaine was in Washington D.C. and she went to Bub and Pop's, which has featured on *Wheeler*, *Drive* and *Real Drive*. She snapped Death and Mr Pickwick's bookmarks next to the fringe she had for lunch.
- ▶ C'mon BubP fans, you can do the same! Send me some pics, please!



April 15



- ▶ *Death and Mr Pickwick* suggests so many possibilities for travel. Following on from yesterday's post about Dr Johnson's cat, Peter Stadlera now takes us inside Dr Johnson's house.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we have some references to Dr Johnson. Well, let's take some time and meet the famous man at home: Dr Johnson's House is a writer's house museum in London in the former home of the 18th-century English writer and lexicographer Samuel Johnson.



- "Built in 1700 by wool merchant Richard Gough, it is a rare example of a house of its era which survives in the City of London and indeed is the only one of Johnson's 18 residences in the City to survive. Five bays wide and five storeys high, it is located at No. 17, Gough Square, a small L-shaped court, now pedestrianised, in a tangle of ancient alleyways just to the north of Fleet Street. Johnson lived and worked in the house from 1748 to 1759, paying a rent of £30, and he compiled his famous *Dictionary of the English Language* there in 1755.



- "In the 19th century, it saw use as a hotel, a print shop and a storehouse. In 1911, it was purchased by newspaper magnate and politician Cecil Harmsworth, who later commented: 'At the time of my purchase of the house in April 1911, it presented every appearance of squalor and decay ... It is doubtful whether in the whole of London there existed a more forlorn or dilapidated tenement.' He restored the house and opened it to the public in 1914. It is now operated by a charitable trust, Dr Johnson's House Trust Ltd.



- "The house features panelled rooms, a pine staircase, and a collection of period furniture, prints and portraits. There are exhibitions about Johnson's life and work. Please enjoy the first part of our tour. Tomorrow you'll see Edda and me dressed in the fashion of that era."







April 16



- ▶ The British artist Peter Jackson, who died in 2003, was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of London. For about thirty years, he produced pictorial newspaper pieces - called *The London Explorer*, *London is Stronger than Fiction* and *Somewhere to Go* - which demonstrated that knowledge, and it is not surprising that occasionally he depicted Mr Pickwick, as you can see in the first three pictures I have posted. Jackson's newspaper pieces were later re-published as books, and today those books are highly collectable.

The George

WILSON STREET

SOUTHWARK



The Leather Bottle

COBBHAM

WENT





- ▶ The fourth of Jackson's pieces in this post may not appear to connect to *The Pickwick Papers*, as it shows Bill Sikes, from *Oliver Twist*, but actually it DOES have a possible connection to *Pickwick*.
- ▶ After murdering Nancy, Bill Sikes flees to Hatfield, and he experiences terrible visions: he imagines that he is pursued by Nancy's eyes. It has always struck me that this was a forerunner to a part of *The Stroller's Tale*, in *Pickwick*. In that tale, the hallucinating clown says to Dismal Jemmy: "All last night, her large staring eyes and pale face were close to mine; whenever I turned, they turned; and whenever I started up from my sleep, she was at the bedside looking at me."



- ▶ And in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I have Seymour reading this section of *The Stroller's Tale*, and the image of the eyes strikes home:
- ▶ "And then he read of the clown haunted by a wife's eyes. 'There's something in her eyes wakes such a dreadful fear in my heart that it drives me mad.' He thought of the carnal acts he had committed with men. There was the dreadful threat of the gallows every time he went with someone. He felt the fear awakened sometimes when Jane looked at him, when she must have guessed what he had been doing."
- ▶ But also, there is a personal connection to Jackson's fourth piece. I used to live in Hatfield - and I frequently visited the *Eight Bells*, the pub that Bill Sikes is thought to have gone to, as Peter Jackson shows. It was in Hatfield indeed that I began writing *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

April 16



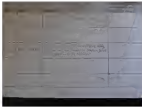
- ▶ This is a brilliant post by Peter Stadiera - he not only continues his trip to Dr Johnson's house, but also Peter and his wife Edda dress in period clothing!!
- ▶ "Johnson's portraits, landscapes and artefacts are a fascinating testament to one of Britain's most witty, charismatic and studied historical figures; an insight into his brilliant mind and colourful life."



- "Go directly to the library (which was probably once Dr. Johnson's bedroom), to flick through a facsimile of Johnson's impressive two-part dictionary. Idiosyncratic entries to watch out for include 'Lexicographer' ('a harmless drudge'), and 'bats' ('a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people'). Other highlights of the house include a beautiful tea set that once belonged to Mrs Thrales, one of Johnson's close female friends (Johnson was known for his partiality for tea); and a portrait thought to be of Francis Barber, Johnson's Jamaican manservant to whom he bequeathed most of his estate.









- "If Dr Johnson was a dedicated follower of fashion we don't know but what I know is that we tried hardest to dress properly in the fashion of that age! It's a fantastic museum and we really enjoyed our visit. If you ever are in London, 'Walk right in!'"

April 17



- ▶ The artist John Charles Moggs (1819-1896) was well-known for painting coaching scenes - and the other day, I was delighted to discover that Moggs had painted one of Moses Pickwick's coaches. This was in the picture "Passing Stonehenge", which I have posted today. In the foreground, is a Royal Mail coach, in a livery of red and black, and behind it is Moses' coach - and, although this photo does not show the fine detail, on the coach's door one can apparently read 'PICKWICK BATH'. In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I describe the Pickwick coaches as having a brown and yellow livery, and I believe I found that colour-scheme mentioned in a book on the history of coaching. This photo doesn't really allow one to see the colours very well, but there is certainly yellow there, and what could be two shades of brown.

April 18



- ▶ Friday of this week is a very special day: the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Cervantes. It is only right that the Death and Mr Pickwick page honours the great Spanish author, because Don Quixote was such an important influence on *The Pickwick Papers*. So, I am delighted that Michael Segers will be doing a series of guest posts on Don Quixote. Over to Michael:
- ▶ "I am so glad that Stephen has asked me to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes, whose magnificent novel *Don Quixote* inspired the narrative, structure, and characters of *The Pickwick Papers*. With the great love that I have for both those novels, this is not a task that I undertake lightly.



- "First, consider the novel. The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha is Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote, or, at least, a long title for a long book. Many readers, when confronted with such a book, expect to be misled or sandbagged, but I want to suggest something very different.
- Yes, I know, it is the foundation of Spanish literature, perhaps the foundation of modern Western novels as well, one of the "Great Books," according to whoever has done the latest list. But I think of James Joyce, who suffered through a pretentious American scholar explaining the symbolism of Ulysses to him. Finally, Joyce slapped him on the back and roared, "But, wait a minute!"
- I don't think Cervantes wrote it as the "Great Book" that it is judged to be. He certainly did not contemplate writing the first modern novel. It is a lot of fun, and I think generations of readers have imposed this "Great Book" perspective onto it. Just as with Shakespeare's work, that label of greatness keeps people from enjoying the work.



- "There is so much going on. One adventure or silly fellow follows another. Quixote and his squire, Sancho Panza, ramble through one inn after another, with whores, drunks, and all manner of eccentrics, as they drink, scold, and inevitably get soundly beaten. They are not on a pilgrimage but on a series of road trips, much like the travels of the Peliccioli Club.
- That describes Don Quixote, but, again, it does not, because there are two books, titled Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes. The first Don Quixote was published in 1605, but, after someone else, in those days without copyright protection, found a second part, Cervantes published his own second part of Don Quixote ten years later. And it is a much different book. Cervantes has fun with the situation, because in the second book, the characters know about, apparently have read, the first part and comment on it. Cervantes was ten years older, and this was done with some additional year's art wisdom. As poor Quixote returns to sanity, his life fades away, and his death is as poignant as any in literature.



- ▶ "If it is Literature. For me, Don Quixote, like *The Pickwick Papers*, is more than a book; certainly more than just an excuse for a teacher of literature (as I was for twenty years) to ramble on and on... Does Quixote's horse Rocinante indeed represent capitalism... or Calvinism? Both novels are a part of my life, and perhaps I have a touch of pride in saying that I never subjected either of them to my classroom.
- ▶ Although Spanish, Don Quixote has had quite an important influence on British literature: it was first translated into English in 1612, just seven years after its publication, and it has left a lasting influence on English literature in such novels as *Joseph Andrews* by Henry Fielding, *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, *Dr. Loupeloire Greaves* by Tobias Smollett (who also translated Don Quixote), *The Return of Don Quixote* by G. K. Chesterton, and *Montgomer Quixote* by Graham Greene, and, as I have already mentioned, *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens.



- ▶ "Traditionally, it was thought that Cervantes and Shakespeare died on the same day, but there seems to be a confusion of calendars and other factors to suggest that they were not. I wonder what Shakespeare might have done with the novel, which, after all, was translated into English four years before his death. Perhaps Don Quixote might have met Sir John Falstaff, while Sancho Panza and Bottom could have shared some antics.
- ▶ From 1996 to 2006, four new English translations of Don Quixote appeared, evidence that only one book, the Bible, has been translated into English more often than Don Quixote. Of the four, Edith Grossman's 2003 translation seems to have the best reviews. You can download a free copy of Don Quixote in several formats at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/996>.



- ▶ "When Winston Churchill said that the United States and England were two countries separated by the same language, we assumed he meant English, but Don Quixote makes me wonder. In the United States, we usually pronounce Quixote as key-hoe-tee, while in England, the preferred pronunciation was quixote-ee, although Dolphyn tells me that that is no longer true.
- ▶ But, Don Quixote brings together all who love literature and Mr. Kent to whatever strange place the mournful knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, may take us, to share his sorrow, as well as periodically, to laugh at him.
- ▶ The picture at the start and end of this page are, respectively, the title page of the first edition of Don Quixote, and the playbill of the Broadway musical, Man of La Mancha, based on the novel.
- ▶ Tomorrow, we will look at the books and literary culture that Don Quixote comes from, how Cervantes used them, and while we are at it, we just might see if that can in some way relate to Death and Mr. Pickwick.

April 18



- ▶ Here is the latest post by the great Peter Stadler, on Garraway's Coffee House. As Peter says, Mr Pickwick wrote his famous "chops and consots (sausage)" note to Mrs Bardell in this coffee house, and this was something I wanted to bring "alive" in Death and Mr Pickwick. In The Pickwick Papers, there was just a note, nothing more, but I wanted to capture the moment at which Mr Pickwick wrote it.
- ▶ "In today's post we'll have a look at the legendary Garraway's Coffee House - its predecessor, Jonathan's Coffee House, which existed from 1680 to 1776, served as London's Stock Exchange.) It has a threefold celebrity: tea was first sold in England here, it was a place of great activity at the time of the South Sea Bubble, and has since been a place of great mercantile transactions. It was opened by Thomas Garraway in Exchange Alley, now known as Change Alley, after the rebuilding of the Royal Exchange area following the fire of 1666.



- It was built on a grand scale, situated on a corner with various entrances into the building, smaller rooms and a kitchen downstairs and a large coffee room upstairs. It had to be rebuilt again after another fire in 1748 and it finally stood down in 1866. All that is now left is a memorial plaque on the original site and a panel on a railway-door at 12 Cornhill, designed by Walter Gilbert (1875-1946), depicting the scene in the coffee house: "Germany's Coffee House, a place of great commercial transaction and frequented by people of quality".





- "It is from this coffee house that Mr Pickwick writes to his landlady about what he wants for dinner. His brief letter - 'Dear Mrs B, chops and tomato sauce, Yours Pickwick' - is later produced as evidence of the fact that he broke a promise to marry her.
- But what has a grasshopper to do with a coffee house? The grasshopper was Thomas Gresham's family symbol (in a forthcoming post I will explain how it came to be so) and appears on a number of buildings in this area, in particular the Royal Exchange. Presumably it indicates that this lovely and very popular symbol was erected by the Gresham family or those connected to their business interests."

The Virtues of the COFFEE-Shop

It is a place where you can find a good cup of coffee, and a good deal of conversation.

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A street scene in London, showing a row of multi-story buildings with many windows. A few people are visible on the street in the foreground.

April 19



- ▶ Here is the second of Michael Seger's wonderful posts in honour of the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Cervantes:
- ▶ "Among the many labels we have tried to stick onto the novel *Don Quixote* is that it is a parody or spoof of the chivalric romances which Don Quixote spends so much time reading. To figure out whether that is true, we need to look at Quixote's library and what happens to it
- ▶ In the first five chapters of the novel, we meet Quixada or Quixada or Quixana, a nobleman who has become so obsessed with his library of tales of knights that he decides to become a knight under the name of Don Quixote de la Mancha, which took him eight days to choose. He and his steed (Rocinante, whose name took him only four days to choose) set out on the first adventure or rally. He is dubbed a knight by a lord of a castle, actually, the landlord of an inn, and ends up thoroughly pummeled by a rouseur and left unable to move



- "By chapter six, a neighboring peasant carries Quixote back to his horse, which he shares with a niece and a housekeeper. With the priest and the barber, they decide that something must be done with his library. In this chapter, we see how "sane" people react to Quixote's books. The housekeeper suggests sprinkling with holy water to drive out all the evil that she is convinced is in it: 'The four books of Amadis of Gaul seems a mysterious thing,' said the curate, 'for, as I have heard say, this was the first book of chivalry printed in Spain, and from this all the others derive their birth and origin; so it seems to me that we ought necessarily to condemn it to the flames as the founder of so vile a sect.' 'Nay, sir,' said the barber, 'I too, have heard say that this is the best of all the books of that kind that have been written, and so, as something singular in its line, it ought to be pardoned.' 'True,' said the curate, 'and for that reason let its life be spared for the present.'



- "Quixote, by extension, Cervantes, takes his books more seriously than just to read them. As fantastic as the books are, if Quixote just lost himself in them, we would not have much of a story. He would not be the sympathetic character that he is, and the novel Don Quixote would not be such an ongoing source of fascination."
- But, what is going on, even after the priest and the barber read up the library, and the housekeeper burns most of the books and tells Quixote that the devil has stolen the room? Although the room and the books are gone, their influence remains. Quixote has his own alternative reality. He has to make the best of an unpleasant reality, even if it means going against the old stories of chivalry. In chapter seven, when he persuades a peasant farmer, Panza to be his squire, Sancho wants to bring along his donkey, his ass, because he does not want to walk. This is a problem for Don Quixote, who tries to "tell" to mind any knight errant taking with him an ass mounted on his back, (but no instance occurred) to his memory. For all that, however, he determined to take him, intending to furnish him with a more homeric mood when a chance of a promised thief, by appropriating the horse of the first diseased knight he encountered."



- ▶ "That seems to be the way he deals with what he would consider trivialities (Sancho's steed), while for the important matters (such as his quest), he goes directly to fantasy mode: "Of a truth, it is a great disgrace for us who call ourselves the Twelve Peers, so carelessly to allow the knights of the Court to gain the victory in this tourney."
- ▶ Yet, a few paragraphs down, he draws on his bookish delusion while dealing with practicalities: "Wounded no," said Don Quixote, "but bruised and battered no doubt, for that bastard Don Roland has cudgelled me with the trunk of an oak tree, and all for envy, because he sees that I alone rival him in his achievements. But I should not call myself Renaldo of Montalvan did he not pay me for it in spite of all his enchantments as soon as I rose from this bed. For the present let them bring me something to eat, for that, I feel, is what will be more to my purpose, and leave it to me to avenge myself."



- ▶ “Who is there?” is he a tenuous synthesis of Quixote (the real name), a hungry old man, and Quixote (a name so less real to its bearer), the knight who rivals the other knight in his achievements? That is the intrigue of Don Quixote, the character and the novel. With every clumsy step of Rocinante or every time Quixote and Sancho get beaten up, we do not know whether to laugh or to cry, whether our knight is trapped in our reality or we are. What are we missing?
- ▶ To jump forward to *The Pickwick Papers*, Samuel Pickwick has an otherworldly drive to travel, with an idealistic simplicity and an obsession with books (as often to write as to read) that rivals Quixote's. Fast forward again to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and in *Mr Pickwick*, we see a man who has not only a library but apparently a museum, from which he is always digging out treasures in support of his own quixotic quest...



- ▶ "Today's pictures show: Don Quixote in his library; the priest, barber, niece, and housekeeper dealing with the library; and the now iconic image that Pablo Picasso created of Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, and their mounts.
- ▶ Now, to end with a surprise. There is another library to be explored, the library of songs preserved about the novel. Jordi Savall, such a great musician that I have said we need a Nobel Prize in Music, just so that he could win it, has compiled a two-CD collection of *Los Músicos del Quijote*, a brief and tantalizing preview of which can be found on YouTube:
- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHJNAE8xkE_k

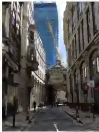
April 19



- Today, Peter Stadlera takes us to Leadenhall Market, a location he had previously posted about. (See post for March 1.)



- "On my way through Leadenhall Market I said hello to Old Tom and went in search of the Green Dragon at 3 Bull's Head Passage, the likely 'original' for The Blue Boar, where Mr Pickwick's faithful valet, Sam Weller, wrote a Valentine to Mary who eventually became his wife in *The Pickwick Papers*. Well you wouldn't think about Sam Weller when seeing the place now. Bull's Head Passage though is well supplied with restaurants and wine bars, but the Green Dragon is no more."



April 19



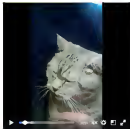
The History and Psychology of Clowns Being Scary

You are not alone in your fear of makeup-wearing entertainers - people have been frightened by clowns for centuries

- ▶ Peter Stadlera has also posted this important article about scary clowns, which mentions *The Pickwick Papers*.
- ▶ http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-history-and-psychology-of-clowns-being-scary-20394516/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=socialmedia



April 19



- ▶ Here is a very special video, in which you can hear the purring of Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat!
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/deathandmrpickwick/posts/833348346799019>

April 20



- ▶ Here is Michael Segers' latest post, in his wonderful series celebrating the 400th anniversary of Cervantes' death:
- ▶ "Don Quixote and Mr Pickwick share something which makes me feel very far from them. Each of them has a servant. Sometimes, as I read earlier literature, I find myself either overwhelmed by servants or, perhaps as people in those days did, I try to ignore them. In Richard Strauss's final opera, *Copacabana* (1942), even a chorus of servants comment on how inappropriate it would be to have servants portrayed in an opera, although there are many servants scattered throughout opera.



MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



- ▶ "In the poem *Maud*, Alfred, Lord Tennyson has his anonymous narrator lament his pecuniary straits by saying, 'I am nameless and poor. / I keep but a man and a maid.' As I look around my house, I wonder what I could find to keep two servants busy, except perhaps helping me maintain my (not-at-all-spoiled) parrot Dory. Then, I remember that earlier in the day, one of my servants pumped water from the well, while another (I am consciously being gender neutral here) did my laundry. Indoor plumbing, electricity, and now the Internet give us more servants than we can count, and we do not have to worry about their gossip.



- ▶ "Although Don Quixote might have preferred a closer relationship with his lady, Dulcinea del Toboso, the strongest relationship in the novel is between the knight and his squire, Sancho Panza. Interestingly, when Mr Pickwick tries to bring up with his landlady Mrs Bardell the prospect of his keeping a servant, she mistakes his words for a proposal of marriage, with disastrous results.
- ▶ Don Quixote and Sancho have a strange relationship, as each represents his own perception of reality. Sancho often reminds his master that he cannot read, and so, he is a stranger and often afraid in the world that Quixote has made and lives in. Quixote, on the other hand, is as much a stranger to the down-and-dirty world in which Sancho tries to keep him safe.



- ▶ "Although *Don Quixote* is sometimes referred to as a picaresque novel, it is in fact an anti-picaresque tale. Granted, the novel is a plotless series of episodes, but since the picaresque, as the hero of a picaresque novel is called, lives by his wits, neither knight nor squire can be said to do so.
- ▶ But, as they ramble through the lower strata of the society, they reflect in many ways the life of their creator, who was a literary man and a military man, who grew up in a very poor household. He had two experiences with prison: for five years as a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire and later in jail in Seville for problems with his accounts as a tax collector. It would be pleasant to think that he might have had a faithful companion such as Sancho, but, if he did, we know nothing of it.



- ▶ "Mr Pickwick, of course, has a very faithful companion in Sam Weller. Perhaps the difference between the two sorts of master and servant (besides the obvious fact that in one the servant, Sancho Panza, is fat, while in the other, the master, Mr Pickwick, is) is that Sam Weller is much more in touch with the world that he lives in and he and Mr Pickwick ramble on than either of the Spaniards with the realities of their lives, as tricky as the word reality is when writing about Don Quixote.
- ▶ Of course, the two servants are both known for their humorous speech. But there is a difference. While Sam is known for quick, on the spot, Sancho tends to let the words flow, almost taking on a life of their own.
- ▶ "Fodges don't distrust a good payer," and he whom God helps does better than he who gets up early, and 'tis the tripe that carry the foot and not the foot the tripe, I mean to say that if God gives me help, and I do my duty honestly, no doubt I'll perform better than a goshawk. May, let them only put a finger in my mouth, and they'll see whether I can bite or not."



- ▶ "Dart is not a good time for servants, although from the high brow novel *Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro to the irrepressible Shirley Booth's television series *Mazel*, they have maintained a niche. So, it may be a surprise to consider two new sets of servants and masters. A self-respecting hobbit such as Frodo Baggins could not have undertaken such an epic quest without his servant Sam Gamgee, and their relationship illustrates a problem in our age. I have seen many suggestions or questions about a sexual element to their relationship, as if we cannot accept a concept of loyalty based on something other than sex.
- ▶ In *Death* and *Mr Pickwick*, *Mr Inbelucate* and *Sompy* are not, strictly speaking, servant and master, but as employer and employee (after an unforgettable job interview), they have a friendship and loyalty that place them in the company of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza and *Mr Pickwick* and Sam Weller.



- "The illustrations for this post include various representations of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, including this pack of cigars..."



- ▶ ...and these bookends. There are many examples of the two on bookends, which, considering how important books are in their story, is very appropriate.
- ▶ Now, please excuse me, because I am a servant, and my master, Imhotep in his gray feathers demands my attention. "



April 20



The Comics Reporter

<http://www.comicsreporter.com>

- ▶ Michael Segers is currently writing great posts for this page about the 400th anniversary of the death of Cervantes. But April 2016 has another significant anniversary. Exactly 180 years ago today, Robert Seymour killed himself.
- ▶ When Seymour's tombstone was unveiled at the Dickens Museum, the Comics Reporter website published this page.
- ▶ http://www.comicsreporter.com/index.php/nest/her_siegel_nor_slusher_is_robert_seymour_the_true_patron_saint_of_victi/
- ▶ asking the question "Is Robert Seymour the True Patron Saint of Victimized Cartoonists?" And I must admit, the recent disgraceful review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* by Dickens Quarterly, in which Dickens's lies are described as non-lies using the academic jargon of "parasitism", says to me that Seymour is still a victim, posthumously.



- ▶ If Seymour had not shot himself, though, it is unlikely that I would have been drawn to the subject-matter of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. There is just something about the combination of talent and tragedy which fascinates. Hollywood biopics get made about suicidal geniuses, not just 'ordinary' geniuses. When the great Dutch soccer star Johann Cruyff died recently, it struck me that I wouldn't be interested in 'The Cruyff Story', no matter how great a player he was; but George Best, whose talent was on a par with Cruyff's, but who drank himself to death, well that's a different matter. Equally, the keyboardist Keith Emerson's suicide last month suggests to me another potential biopic; but without his raising a gun to his head, the harsh truth is that few producers in Hollywood would consider 'The Keith Emerson Story' as a likely box-office draw.



- And tragedy and talent of course haunts the creation of *The Pickwick Papers*. Let me say that I think that *The Pickwick Papers* has the greatest backstory of any work of fiction. It cried out to be turned into a novel itself – as that's what I did. But the history of *The Pickwick Papers* is more than just Seymour's tragedy. It is also the tale of the colossal success of *Pickwick*, which affected so many lives, including mine, of course, my own. It took twelve years to write *David Copperfield* and *Mr Pickwick*, and then I had to wait a couple of additional years, to fit in with publishers' schedules. But I don't regret the time and effort, not for a second. But garbage such as the *Dickens Quarterly* review indicates that there is still work to be done, even after 150 years, before Seymour is given his proper place, both in Dickens's career, and as an important nineteenth century artist in his own right. However, there are positive signs. The review in the *Dickens Fellowship's* journal *The Dickensian* although grudging, and misquoting in many places, did at least say "Dickens is onto something". And, later this year, Professor Brian Maidment will publish the first academic book about Seymour. And we must not forget that the paperback edition of *David Copperfield* and *Mr Pickwick* will soon be out, featuring Seymour's greatest creation, Mr Pickwick, on the cover.



- ▶ And to finish this post, there is a Seymour picture, *Going By Steam*, which in its combination of violence and humour seems to me to capture much of the spirit of Robert Seymour. Indeed, at the beginning of *The Pickwick Papers*, Mr Pickwick talks about "boilers were bursting", thereby making travel dangerous - and this is probably an allusion to the explosions of steam-driven carriages, as shown in Seymour's picture.
- ▶ So, tonight, I shall raise a glass to you Robert Seymour. Your death was a tragedy, but your work lives on.

April 21



- ▶ Here is the fourth post in Michael Sapers' brilliant series celebrating Cervantes.
- ▶ "There are three moments in world literature that are such powerful reflections of the works that they come from, as well as of the main characters in those works, that they have taken on a life of their own. I mention that because one of them is in *Don Quixote*, and even someone who has never read that novel surely already has an image in mind after simply seeing the title of the book.
- ▶ One of these scenes is from Mark Twain's novel *Tom Sawyer*, in which smooth-tongued Tom tricks the other children in town into not only doing his work, whitewashing the fence, but also paying him for the dubious privilege. Another such scene, quite different, involves a skull, not on a pirate's flag, but in the hands of a Danish prince. The prince is Hamlet, of course, the skull belonged to the jester Yorick, and the scene is from William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*.



- "So, what would be a similar scene from *Don Quixote*? Do I even need to give the hint, windmills? Don Quixote attacks windmills, which he sees as giants, and no good comes of the experience (which you can read at the end of this post).
- Strangely, as so often happens in *Don Quixote*, not much of anything comes of the experience, in fact: "then, discussing the late adventure, they followed the road to Puerto Lapice," as if they had not just come through one of the most iconic scenes in Western literature. Instead, we have another illustration of the alternate realities of the knight and the squire. Quixote says, "If I make no complaint of the pain it is because knights-errant are not permitted to complain of any wound," while Sancho admits, "I must complain however small the ache may be."



- ▶ "That may be what makes the image so powerful. Just like the few paragraphs Mark Twain devoted to Tom Sawyer's scheme or the few lines Hamlet speaks over the skull of Yorick, these paragraphs capture so well not only the characters but also the whole story.
- ▶ But, for me, there is a problem. I cannot remember whether, when I first read the three works, I already knew these three scenes, but I suspect I did, just as I suspect most people have, even some who have never read Tom Sawyer, Hamlet, and Don Quixote. I wish I could somehow un-learn these scenes, so that I could read them fresh again, as we cannot do, just as I wish, whenever I am enjoying Rossini's opera, *William Tell*, that I could somehow un-hear what I so long knew as the theme music of *The Lone Ranger* and enjoy Rossini's bolsterous composition as what it is, just one part of the overture to the opera about a heroic archer, not a stand-alone celebration of a masked hero.



- ▶ "So ingrained is the image in our culture that there is a Wikipedia page devoted to "tilting at windmills," which mentions that we have a film, a rock band, and a song of theirs all titled, *They Might Be Giants*, which refers to this incident, and also that Anderson Cooper used this phrase earlier this year in coverage of this year's presidential campaign.
- ▶ Although I am trying to make connections with *The Pickwick Papers* and *Don Quixote*, I have not had much luck today. Thanks to the joys of ebooks, I can report that there is only one reference to windmills in Dickens's work, "On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with cornfields and pastures, with here and there a windmill, or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see." To me, at least, there is no single image in *The Pickwick Papers* comparable to the windmill scene of *Don Quixote*.



- "The image book includes the classic illustration by Geoffrey Borge, Don Quixote's macho knightly appearance, with Axtaris, and some rather less than reverential interpretations of the work."
- Here is Comanegra's account of Don Quixote's great battle.
- "He sat, somewhat and wide awake, for a sleep he might afford his
 you." A slight breeze at that moment sprang up, and the great
 sails began to move, whereupon Don Quixote exclaimed:
 "Though ye speak more than the giant Urreco, ye have
 to reckon with me."
 Heaving, and compressing himself with all his heart to his
 lady Dulcinea, imploring her to support him in just a perch,
 with lance in rest and lowered by the bridle, he dashed at
 Rocante's tallest gallop and fell upon the first mill that stood
 in front of him; but as he drove his lance point into the tail the
 wind whirled it round with such force that it showered the lance
 to pieces, sweeping with it horse and rider who were riding
 over on the plain. In a noisy confusion Rocante hastened to his
 assistance as fast as his legs could go, and when he came up
 found him unable to move.
 "God bless me!" said Rocante, "Oh I've told your worship to
 mind what you were doing, for they were only windmills!"
 "Nay, friend Rocante," replied Don Quixote, "that same sage
 friend who carried all my study and books, has turned those
 stones into mills in order to rob me of the glory of vanquishing
 them."

April 21

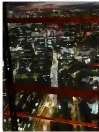


- ▶ Here is Peter Stadlera, accompanied by his wife Edda, reading the recent *Big Issue* article about *Death and Mr Pickwick* in a great location in London! Cheers, Peter and Edda! I love the idea of *Death and Mr Pickwick* being mentioned in high places!
- ▶ "In today's post we have a *Big Issue*. Is there a better place to read a fine article on Stephen's masterpiece than at a table with a fantastic view in the highest restaurant of London, the Duck & Waffle, on the 40th floor of the Heron Tower in the City of London (110 Bishopsgate, London EC2)? As you can see we had a splendid dinner, with some fine wine and enjoyed some breathtaking views over London. The last picture is taken from the outside elevator. With *Death and Mr Pickwick* in the highest spheres - cheers!"









April 22



- ▶ Well, it is the big day: the 400th anniversary of the death of Cervantes. Below is Michael Segers' brilliant final post, in a Fabulous series - thank you so much, Michael, for these wonderful posts.
- ▶ "Welcome to the fiesta, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes (or Don Miguel, as I shall call him today, to share with him the name I sometimes would let my students in my Spanish classes call me). I seem to take a page from the Roman Catholic Church, which commemorates its saints not on their birthdays but on their deathdays, when they leave the Church Militant (on earth) to take up their place in the Church Triumphant (in heaven). So, join me in celebrating Don Miguel's entry into that big library in the sky, where, perhaps, the winged librarians will allow a little noise.



The location of Convent. (Source and other illustrations are brought to us by the longshot.org)

► "Any day is a good day for celebrating Don Miguel's achievements. In the past couple of years, however, we have gained a new perspective on his death, because he chose to be buried in a convent of a small order of cloistered nuns, who had helped his parents pay his ransom after five years of imprisonment by the Ottoman Empire. His body has been found, still in the same convent, looked over by the same order of nuns, after investigators used radar to look into the floor of the convent to locate his body. So, the nuns today might remember nuns who remembered nuns who remembered nuns... back four centuries. If they still share anecdotes about Don Miguel, they have not told anyone. (Learn more about his grave: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31850032>.)



- "I like to imagine that there was one place the radar did not penetrate, a tiny cell visited only by two of the nuns, where there is an ancient nun, sleeping, perhaps, breathing, perhaps. Her family forced her behind the thick walls and seldom opened the gates of the convent after she had lost her virtue and the family's honor in the arms of Don Miguel. She made a vow that she would never leave him. So, he died and was buried in the convent, but she did not die. She lived on and on, and gradually, she seemed to become something other than human. Just as Don Quixote lay awake for hours, contemplating his unattainable love, she lies, neither awake nor asleep, for months or years or centuries, contemplating her near but lost love. Sancho Panza would believe that story, and Don Quixote would appreciate it.



- ▶ "These five days of contemplating Don Miguel, I have felt a closeness to him in my own life. Like William Dean Howells, who wrote about his youthful discovery of *Don Quixote* and his later return, I am aware of the change and growth in my relationship with Don Miguel. You can read Howells's brief but touching essay:
- ▶ <http://www.online-literature.com/william/literary-passions/3/>.



- ▶ "I honestly have only one entry on my bucket list, to learn horseback riding. Perhaps Don Miguel will inspire me to find a broken-down Roderante to amble slowly with me. In my current life, I seem to be Roderante myself, offering my shoulder for my parrot Dory, who seems to fancy himself a knight-errant in gray feathers (perhaps not a parrot-errant, but surely the official Death and Mr Pickwick parrot), as I sally through the house as his steed.
- ▶ I need to add another entry to the list, to re-read Don Quixote, not only to re-read it, but - dare I say it - to attempt to read at least a little of it in Spanish. Although I became proficient enough in Spanish to teach it and to face a month in Buenos Aires (where, it seemed, most people spoke English better than I), I have never read but one sentence of Don Quixote in Spanish.

Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote



- "Buenos Aires gave me an unexpected connection to Don Quixote, because I one day found myself sitting at the typewriter of the great Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges. Whether it was the typewriter on which he wrote his mind-bending little story, *Pierre Menard Author of the Quixote*, I do not know. I do know that as great a surprise as it was to find myself at Borges's typewriter, it was quite a surprise to find in *Death and Mr Pickwick* a reference to that story, "which concerns a man who reproduces, word for word, a fragment of that great work of literature - not as an exercise in copying but as a creative act of supreme audacity, with the author having never read the original." I hope you are intrigued enough to read that amazing story:
<https://www.coldbeacon.com/writing/borges-quixote.html>.



- ▶ "Don Quixote is a living presence in so many ways. As I have already mentioned, in recent years, we have had four new English translations of *Don Quixote*, a novel which continues to inspire so many people in so many ways. Although such ventures sometimes seem cursed, he has attracted quite a few filmmakers. The image here is of Jean Rochefort as Don Quixote in *Lost in La Mancha*, a documentary about Terry Gilliam's attempted filming of *Don Quixote*. After almost two decades, Gilliam is going to try again to make a film about *Don Quixote*.



- "The black and white image with the motorcycle is of Francisco Reiguera as Don Quixote in Orson Welles's incomplete film of *Don Quixote*."



Adventures of Don Quixote (~1933) Full Cinema Movie

- ▶ "The black and white image of Don Quixote in a helmet which is at the start of this post is from G.W. Pabst's *Adventures of Don Quixote* with opera singer Feodor Chaliapin in the title role. While Gilliam and Welles never completed their *Don Quixote* films, Pabst made his film three times: in English, French, and German, and you can enjoy the English version online:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8hTn6Czp2g>.



- ▶ "There are many musical works inspired by *Don Quixote*. For now, I will share two, with the hope you will look for others. French composer Jules Massenet composed an opera *Don Quichotte*:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IM28Rp3tTaE>.



Jacques Brel - Le Quixote

- ▶ "Perhaps, at least in the United States, the best-known musical adaptation of *Don Quixote* is the Broadway musical *Man of La Mancha*. Belgian singer/songwriter Jacques Brel was so enchanted by this play that he translated it into French, directed it, and in his only musical theater performance, played the title role. You can hear him singing the best-known song from the play in his translation and in his distinct voice:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2kn0Q3UHDc>.



- "Although my celebration of Don Quixote's death draws to a close, my celebration of his life and work is not going strong. I first discovered Don Quixote and The Pickwick Paper's own Ball a century ago, as much as I cherish Don and Mr. Pickwick and appreciate the achievements of its author, I do not have a relationship of such duration with the new novel as I have with the first two. Still, last night, when my parrot Gary had called it a night, and I was getting ready to, I saw Don Quixote and Sancho Panza sitting at the table on my back porch. Sam Miller held open the screen door, and as Mr. Pickwick filed the doorway, he pointed at the ceiling fan and reached for his notebook to comment on the strange object. Don Quixote burst into laughter and said something I could not hear through the glass, but I imagine he called it a trophy from one of the giants he met on the plain. Sam gently pushed Mr. Pickwick onto the porch, because Sancho and Mr. Miller were waiting behind him. As Mr. Pickwick sat, he caught my eye and gestured to me. I opened the sliding glass door and heard them all calling for glasses. They pulled out several bottles, and I was reduced to serving sorbets and newtons alike. When I was not needed, I sat on a stool in the corner, taking in their tales, and then... I woke up... or maybe, I fell asleep."

**Yo soy
Uno de los
400 de**



<https://www.instagram.com/sergioarce1980/>

18.11.2019

- ▶ "A final point: I mentioned that there is one sentence of *Don Quixote* that I know in Spanish, a sentence that for me is appropriate for each of the three great novels referred to in the previous paragraph. 'El que lee mucho y anda mucho, ve mucho y sabe mucho.' One who reads much and walks much, sees much and knows much.
- ▶ Don Miguel, I do not say ¡Adiós! (good-bye), but I do say, ¡Hasta la próxima! (till next time), although someone else must take responsibility for celebrating the 500th anniversary of your death."

April 22



- ▶ I love the details in this post by Peter Sheldrake – such as “Vauxhall fairs, “the dark redox” because if one is to capture a sense of life, details are SO important.
- ▶ “We’ve already had a post on the Vauxhall Gardens. But on my recent Death and Mr Pickwick Tour I saw a very interesting exhibition about the Gardens in the Museum of London so I want to rekindle your interest in that fantastic place.
- ▶ Where did 18th-century Londoners go to have a good time and relax in the summer months? They gravitated to pleasure gardens, which were new and opposing earlier formal gardens in the city. The most popular pleasure garden was one at Vauxhall. Each year, at the beginning of May, it opened its doors to the public. As it was located on the south side of the river, people arrived either by carriage, crossing over Westminster Bridge, or hired a waterman, at one of the city’s Thames-side stairs, to row them there by boat. You had to pay an admission fee of one shilling (five pence) to enter. Inside, there was an enclosed space with trees, lined walks, fountains and outdoor lighting. An orchestra and singers performed the latest music from a raised bandstand.



- "Food and drink were served. The most famous item on the menu was 'Vauxhall ham'. It was so thin that it was claimed you could see through it if you held it up to the light!



"There were supper boxes decorated with painted scenes. Looking out from them, diners could observe the fashionably dressed clientele as they promenaded up and down.



- "The evening often ended with a firework display. When it became dark, a whistle was blown and a number of the garden employees touched matches to fuses and, as if by magic, the garden was suddenly illuminated by over a thousand oil lamps.



- "Later in the evening, the bolder visitors would stray into the area known as 'the dark walks', the site of amorous liaisons. You can stroll through the Museum of London's beautifully recreated 18th century pleasure gardens or, visit the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, now a public park which underwent a regeneration project and was re-opened last year. Now you deserve some Vauxhall ham..."

April 22



- Here is the latest post by Peter Stadlera. When I look at the theatrical posters, I realise that there are so many things, related to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, which are collectable. I think DaMP represents a goldmine of opportunities for people who have the urge to collect. And Peter's contribution to this page is IMMENSE. Well done once again, Peter.
- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about the Astley Theatre, an immensely popular place of entertainment at the time. It opened in 1773, when the entertainment was at first mainly provided by Astley himself and consisted of showing his horsemanship, assisted by a clown and some music.

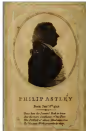


- ▶ "According to Peter Cunningham in his *Handbook of London. Past and Present* (1850) 'transparent fireworks, slack-rope vaulting, Egyptian pyramids, tricks on chairs, tumbling, &c., were subsequently added, the ride enlarged, and the house opened in the evening'. In 1824, *The Memoirs of J. Decastro, Comedian* was published which contained 'an analysis of the life of the late Philip Astley, Esq.' Jacob Decastro had switched in 1786 from Astley's competitor 'The Royal Circus', run by Charles Dibdin, to Astley's where he was engaged as a performer in various burlesques, musical farces, and pantomimes.



- ▶ "Dickens wrote one of the *Sketches by Boz* on Astley's theatre, not commenting so much on the actual performance, but more on the spectators and discrepancy between the glamorous outfits the actors wore on the stage and the threadbare appearance of their clothes when they were standing outside the stage door in between performances. He also mentions one of the equestrian performers by name, Miss Woolford, whom, I assume, is the later wife of Andrew Ducrow. The theatre continued to be popular long after Astley's death in 1814. Its final owner was 'Lord' George Sanger, who bought it for £11,000 in 1871 and ran it as 'Sanger's Amphitheatre' for over 10 years. It finally closed and was demolished in 1893. The location of the theatre was Westminster Bridge Road in Lambeth."





April 22



In the footsteps of Cervantes, the Shakespeare of Spain
Shakespeare and Cervantes died only two years apart.

WWW.TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

- ▶ Peter Stadlera has also found this very interesting article on Cervantes.
- ▶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/spain/madrid/articles/in-the-footsteps-of-cervantes-the-shakespeare-of-spain/?sf24823149=1>

April 23



- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I mention 'gin palaces' - nineteenth-century slang for attractive drinking establishments, whose aim was to use décor to bring in more customers. Well, last week, Elaine and I went to Birmingham, and for the first time ever we encountered a modern pub, The Jekyll and Hyde, which has an upstairs nineteenth-century style gin parlour. We couldn't resist doing Pickwickian research there.





- The food was fantastic - I had baked camembert and fig tart as my starter...



- ...apple stuffed pork loin as my main...



- ...with the cheese board to follow.



- But if I had to choose one thing which was the masterpiece of the evening, it was the Road to Ruin cocktail. The reason I went for that cocktail was that the poem, *The Road to Ruin*, is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.
- As you will recall, I show the young Dickens watching the play, and a character called Goldfinch comes on stage, who adopts a staccato speech pattern, similar to Mr Jaggs's, whenever he gets on to the subject of horses. Goldfinch was also notable for saying "That's your sort" which became a catchphrase in London when the play was first performed, and spread like wildfire across the city. Indeed, I considered including a scene about the spread of "That's your sort" in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, as it seemed a fair comment of the way that Sam Weller's headlines spread across the city, when *Pickwick*'s took off, though in the final version of the novel I dropped the idea.
- Anyway, the taste of the Road to Ruin cocktail is very much *My sort*!! It combines Portobello gin, misleach, rums, orange and a tonade sugar-dipped rum. Do check out the Jekyll and Hyde's website.
- <http://www.thejekyllandhyde.co.uk>

April 24



- ▶ In Birmingham, there is the Pen Museum, where you will find Pickwickiana!
- ▶ The Pickwick Pen was introduced in 1866, by the manufacturers Cameron and Macniven. It was famously associated with an advertising slogan which mentioned three pens made by the company:
- ▶ "They come as a boon and a blessing to men, The Pickwick, The Owl and The Waverley pen."



- ▶ The Pickwick had a turned-up point, like the Waverley, though was finer - The Owl had a turned-down point - and was still being manufactured in the early twentieth century, though eventually sales fell to moderate levels, and at the end it was mainly used by certain government and railway offices. A pen which copied the Pickwick pen was used in Japan, but owing to lack of trademark protection, and prohibitive import duties, Cameron and MacIver reaped no benefit from Japanese sales.
- ▶ The Pen Museum is a fascinating place - one of the best 'small museums' I have visited. For details of admission, check out their website: <http://penmuseum.org.uk/>
- ▶ Home from Birmingham tomorrow. (Thanks to Jamie Johnston for telling me about the Pen Museum.)









Agents for Scotland, Ireland, &c.
MACNIVEN & CAMERON,
 10, Market Street, GLASGOW.







1076 NEWSPAPERS

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FIVE PEN

HARRISON & TAYLOR

1000 Broadway, New York







April 24



- ▶ Peter Stadlera's posts are so informative. I had never heard of the Shoeblack Society, which is mentioned in his latest post.
- ▶ "We all know that Sam Miller was a bootblack and we also know that at the age of 11 young Dickens was sent, by a father and mother whose finances were out of control, to earn 5 or 6 shillings a week in a boot-blacking factory (Women's Blacking Factory), pasting labels onto pots of blacking. Soon after, his father was arrested for debt and sent to the Marshalsea Prison; then the family home was given up and Dickens's mother and siblings moved into prison with his father. He was left to wander the streets, to fend for himself, vulnerable to the sort of fate that later befell Oliver Twist. In his fragment of autobiography, not published until after his death in 1870, Dickens wrote of the trauma of this time of his life, and the impact it had on shaping his character.



- "Concern for the welfare of poor, unprotected children led to the foundation of the Shoeblack Society in the 1850s, which taught children the trade, and was supported by Dickens.



- "Here we see Gray's Inn Lane, 1885. In 1827, Dickens was sent to work as a clerk at Gray's Inn for a friend of his father's. He later described it as 'one of the most depressing institutions in brick and mortar known to the children of men'. These houses on the lane were demolished to widen the road in 1878-9.



- "But back to the Shoeblack Society: The East London Shoeblack Society was established on July 31st, 1854, one of a dozen or so Shoeblack Brigades established in London in the mid-19th century to provide employment and accommodation for homeless and destitute boys. The Society was based at 4 Mansell Street, Whitechapel, (renumbered as 96 in about 1869) where accommodation was provided for up to 80 boys, mostly aged from 13 to 16.



- ▶ As a follow-up to Peter's post, Ian Keable has posted this similar blacking advert, in which a cockerel is substituted for the cat.

April 25



- ▶ The cricket match in *The Pickwick Papers* has inspired several cricket clubs around the world to call themselves The Pickwick Cricket Club. There is one in Barbados, for instance, which has supplied two captains of the West Indies team. There is another in Los Angeles. In Switzerland, there is even a *Mr Pickwick* twenty20 cricket league, whose participating teams compete for a *Mr Pickwick Cup*. There is also a Pickwick Cricket Club in Birmingham, whose ground I passed the other day.



- I am afraid I know next to nothing about cricket, but I have managed to find a series of six oil paintings online by the artist Dave Thomas, which show cricketing characters from *The Pevensie Papers*.









- Also, here is a cricketing picture by Robert Seymour, from a book mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, *In School and Out of School*, published in 1825.



- Seymour also drew Lord's Cricket Ground for the frontispiece of the 1833 book *The Young Cricketer's Tutor* by John Hyren.



- And here the original sketch for the picture, which is in the museum at Lord's. I have indeed heard it stated that Seymour was the first person ever to do a cricketing illustration. I wouldn't be able to say whether that is true or not, but it could be true, because the first fully illustrated book on cricket, *Felix of the Bat*, did not appear until 1845.

April 25

Warren's Blacking Factory



- ▶ Peter Stadlera's latest post says more about blacking...it forms an excellent pair with his post of yesterday.
- ▶ "On our *Death and Mr Pickwick* tour today we start at Charing Cross railway station in the centre of the city. Much of Dickens's formative experience came from working at Jonathan Warren's blacking, or boot polish, factory when he was 12 years old. (He pasted labels on ceramic pots while his father John was in jail for unpaid debts, as I mentioned in my last post.) The factory was at the since-demolished Hungerford Stairs on the Thames, where the train station stands today.





- "From Charing Cross, dogleg a block to Buckingham Street, lined with pretty, well-preserved redbrick Georgian houses. An office complex at number 15 was once a lodging place for Dickens along with Mrs Crupp, his landlady, as well as the first residence of the fictional David Copperfield, a character in Dickens's eighth novel, *The Personal History, Adventures, Experience and Observation of David Copperfield the Younger of Blunderstone Rookery*.



- "Be sure to check out the adjacent, large stone watergate, dating from Dickens's day, which was a passageway to river docks before city officials pushed the border of the Thames southward in a bid for more real estate.



- "Going up the street and turning right into The Strand we have a look at The Adelphi today. The young Dickens loved The Adelphi, and many of his novels were dramatised here without his permission, often before the endings had been written..."

April 25

Michael Kevane



- ▶ The blog <https://mikevane.com/> has just mentioned *Death and Mr Pickwick*. This is what is said:
- ▶ "Stephen Jarvis's *Death and Mr. Pickwick* did not win the Pulitzer. It should win something else: The Rambling Prize for Catering to Literary-Handed Readers Who Love Literary Eccosystems and Get-Connecting. Hey, that's fine! This 800+ page is so ambitious, so full of trivia, with so little plot (Robert Seymour becomes England's premier cartoonist/carcaturist/illustrator, only to have his Mr. Pickwick idea hijacked by the writer of the copy, Charles Dickens, and in despair he commits suicide, and Dickens and publisher then claim all the credit for the surprise success of the "novel"), and so deliberately impeded on a Pickwickian amorgasbord of characters and vignettes, that it can feel overwhelming. The book easily makes you want to stay up all night, finding Seymour's prints on Wikipedia, on eBay (I can buy one for only \$100... hmmm), and learning ever more historical trivia. Gadbooks!"

April 26



- ▶ I TRY SNUFF FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER TWENTY YEARS!
- ▶ There is a lot of snuff consumed in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I have tried snuff before - when I was writing about unusual leisure activities, I entered the British Snuff-Taking Championships - but just that once, and never since. Well, when I was in Birmingham recently, for the first time ever I came across a pub, The Wellington, that sold boxes of snuff. What could I do but conduct Pickwickian research? Check out the video:
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/deathandmrpickwick/videos/836310313169489/>

April 26



- ▶ Peter Stadlera now takes us to the area of London where *The Pickwick Papers* was first published, by Chapman and Hall. I like the old photo showing WH Smith - I had no idea that this British bookseller (which even today runs a chain of nationwide stores) took over the Chapman and Hall premises.
- ▶ "Our *Death and Mr Pickwick* tour led us to the location of the publisher of *The Pickwick Papers*. Chapman and Hall were located at 186 Strand, London. Dickens ended his relationship with Chapman and Hall in 1844. William Hall fell ill suddenly and died at the firm's office on Sunday, 7th March 1847, aged forty-six.



- "In 1852, when W. H. Smith needed larger quarters, Chapman and Hall vacated their offices at 186 Strand and moved to 193 Piccadilly.



- ▶ "Despite losing Dickens, the company continued to prosper. Their literary adviser, John Forster, helped them to obtain several high profile authors, including William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Carlyle, William Harrison Ainsworth, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Kingsley, Arthur Hugh Clough, Robert Browning and Charles Lyell. In 1839 Dickens broke with Bradbury and Evans and returned to Chapman and Hall. On the retirement of Edward Chapman in 1864 Frederic Chapman became the new head of the company.
- ▶ In 1865 Chapman sold a third of the company to Anthony Trollope (1818-1882), who passed it on to his son, Henry Morville Trollope. Chapman and Hall published Dickens's last two novels, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). Three months before his death, Dickens signed an agreement with Chapman and Hall confirming their shared ownership of Dickens's copyrights. Frederic Chapman died of influenza on 1st March 1885 at his London house, 10 Devonian Square. Well, the site of their offices looks completely different now."

April 27



- ▶ The Electric Light Orchestra have a new album out, as you can see on Peter's Stadler's T-shirt, and here are Peter and Sir Pelzi using that to make an analogy with *Death and Mr Pickwick*!
- ▶ "ELO have a fantastic new album out. It's called *Alone in the Universe*. With Stephen's masterpiece *Death and Mr Pickwick* you'll never walk alone and aren't alone in the universe. You have the universe in your hands actually! THANK you STEPHEN for that literary treasure island!"



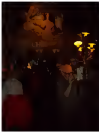
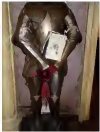


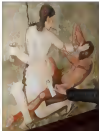
April 27



- ▶ The *Death and Mr Pickwick* facebook page has now been running for nearly eighteen months, and during that time I have been accompanied on my Pickwickian travels by the UK hardback copy of the novel, which (as some of you have noticed) has been getting tatter and tatter.
- ▶ With the launch of the UK paperback imminent (on May 12), I thought it was time to retire the hardback, and so the trip to Birmingham, which I have covered over the last few days, was its final mission.
- ▶ Just before we left Birmingham, we took the hardback to the Bacchus bar and restaurant - named of course after the Roman god of wine, who gets mentioned in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Bacchus is a real find, and as you can see, I really enjoyed going there, with the hardback putting in a fine final performance.







- However, like Mr Inbelicate at the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, the handback whispered to me that it was very tired, and had to let its young friend, the bookmark, do the shot of the fresco.



- The hardback made one last appearance at Maidenhead station, and then collapsed onto the platform - dead.





- And so, time to launch its successor, the UK paperback with its new take on the 'aged paper' look. I discovered recently that Thomas McLean, the printshop owner who appears in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, had published a print, *A View of Toplow from Maidenhead Bridge*, by the artist Robert Havell (1769-1832), which, astonishingly shows the very area of Maidenhead where we live. Our apartment building would rise on the left bank over 150 years later, and indeed opposite the little island you can see in the Thames (such an island is called an 'ait', sometimes spelt 'eyot'), there is now the Thames Hotel, where Elaine and I often go for a drink in the evening.



- ▶ As you can see by comparing the print to the modern picture, Haveli has used a little artistic licence in depicting the Thames, as there is not an EXACT correspondence between the two vistas. But anyway, we thought it was an appropriate place to launch the new edition of the novel.
- ▶ But strangely enough, as we stood on the bridge, a red kite - a bird of prey that flourishes in Maidenhead - flew at us, and came within about ten feet. I have to say, it was pretty scary, and I might easily have dropped the book in the Thames. The bird was perhaps attracted by the red on the cover, which could have looked like blood.
- ▶ Or perhaps Dickens has been reincarnated as a red kite, and was seeking to sabotage the book's mission...

April 9



- ▶ Continuing the account of my day with Peter Stadlera...
- ▶ As you know, historical research always builds up a thirst in me, so Peter and I stopped in the Old Red Cow pub, near Barbican tube station.



- Not far away, though, was the reason for our being in this part of London: I recently discovered that there is a building, Seddon House, which is named after the furniture manufacturer, George Seddon, for whom Seymour's father worked, as featured at the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- ▶ What's more, nearby is London House, which was the location of Seddon's furniture factory. As you can see, there is a plaque which states that the building was devastated by fire in 1788. There were in fact several fires at the building, including one in 1790, and it is not clear why the plaque only commemorates one. Fire at this building is mentioned by the bagman near the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*: "Seddon - the man in charge - he's worth a fortune. Lost a bit in a fire, I hear, but didn't stop him. When he passes it all on to his sons, they'll have a lot to thank their father for."
- ▶ This remark plays upon the mind of Seymour's father, and stokes up his own ambitions, with the result that he goes to London, and thereby makes sure that Robert Seymour is raised as a Londoner.
- ▶ More historical research tomorrow...



April 9



- ▶ Peter Stadlera now posts about a London pub with a Pickwickian name...
- ▶ "In Bath we went to the famous Pickwickian pub The Saracen's Head. In London there was another Saracen's Head, once a celebrated tavern and coaching establishment, which stood on the north side of Snow Hill, 'without Newgate.'



- "It was mentioned in 1522 as an inn with 30 beds and stalls for four horses, but was demolished to make way for the Holborn Viaduct and its approaches in 1868. Dickens himself wrote in *Nicolas Nickleby*: "Near to the jail, and by consequence near to Smithfield . . . and on that particular part of Snow Hill, where omnibus horses going eastward seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westward not unfrequently fall by accident, is the coachyard of the Saracen's Head Inn; its portal guarded by two Saracens' heads and shoulders . . . frowning upon you from each side of the gateway. The Inn itself, garnished with another Saracen's head, frowns upon you from the top of the yard."

Saratoga's Head, SNOW HILL.

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Carriage

Parcage

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- "Today you see police lanterns in parapets over side elevations as it is home to the City of London police station in Snow Hill. Stay tuned for further points of interest on our *Death and Mr Pickwick Tour!*"

April 10



► A meal...



► ...a plaque...



- "I have also posted a picture of the equestrian statue of King William III in St James Square London from 1808."



► ...a pint...



- ...a cat. All elements of the finale to my recent meeting with Peter Stadlera. Let's take the pint first...



- This was in the Lord Raglan public house - a pub which connects to yesterday's post about George Seddon, the furniture maker who employed Seymour's father. As you will recall, at the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, when Seymour's father was trying to make friends with the upholsterers of Seddon's, they sent him on a wild goose chase, of various pubs. One of those pubs, the Mourning Bush, survives to this day, though it is now known as the Lord Raglan.



- And the Lord Raglan is opposite one of the most extraordinary places in London, Postman's Park, which features in the movie *Closer*, starring Julia Roberts. The park has an array of plaques commemorating those who lost their lives trying to save others. And the park has personal Pickwickian significance: because it was here, a few years ago, that I met the Pickwick expert Professor Bob Patten. This was prior to going for a drink in nearby Gresham Street...which used to be called Cateaton Street...a street which was mentioned in the prospectus for *The Pickwick Papers*. I can remember telling Bob about the part in *Death and Mr Pickwick* where Dickens refers to the exact spot in Kent where Mr Pickwick dropped a whip - which turned out to be crucial evidence that Seymour had been to the spot prior to his involvement with Dickens.



- Afterwards, we headed for the Brick Lane area of London, as we had booked a table at the Muhib restaurant.



- ▶ However, after our chicken tikka masalas, we just had to visit the Pride of Spitalfields pub, where there is a resident cat. 'Why did we go there?' Well, in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, the alcoholic clown J S Grimaldi wanders around in a drunken haze, roughly in this part of London, and he ends up in an unidentified back street pub, where he starts babbling about a "cat's meat man" - that is, a supplier of cat food. The fact that The Pride of Spitalfields has a resident cat would have been reason enough to visit the pub, as an "echo" of J S Grimaldi, but there was added significance when I discovered that one of the pub's nineteenth-century clients was a certain James Hardiman - a Jack the Ripper suspect... who was also a cat's meat man!



- The slight blurriness of this cat picture is of course deliberate...suggesting Grimaldi's befuddled state of mind...



April 10



- ▶ This post by Peter Stadlera provides important background material for *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I had no idea that the Foundling Hospital was effectively the first public art gallery in Britain and also that it was an important stage on the road to the Royal Academy - and of course Seymour exhibited at the Academy, and then had a painting rejected. And do check out the photo of the matron's mallet!
- ▶ "We will have a walk through the Foundling Museum today with many impressions (pictures) I got there."



- ▶ "Captain Thomas Coram retired to Rotherhithe in 1719 after achieving success in the New World, establishing a shipwright's business in Boston, and later in Taunton, Massachusetts. After numerous attempts at presenting the King with petitions which emphasised not only Coram's compassion for the children but also concern for their subsequent education into useful citizens, subscriptions poured in and on 17 October 1739 the King signed a Royal Charter. The Governors and Guardians of this new enterprise met to receive the Charter on 20th November 1739 at Somerset House. The group included many of the important figures of the day. The aristocracy was represented by dukes and earls; magnates and merchant bankers represented the financial world and men of standing included Dr Richard Mead (the foremost physician), the artist William Hogarth and Captain Coram himself.



- "Thus the Foundling Hospital was established for the 'education and maintenance of exposed and deserted young children'. This institution, described as 'the most imposing single monument erected by eighteenth century benevolence', caught the public imagination and became London's most popular charity.

March 31



- ▶ Herb Moskowitz has just sent me this, in response to my request for pics celebrating the 180th anniversary of *The Pickwick Papers*. Many thanks, Herb
- ▶ "Happy Birthday, Mr Pickwick!"
- ▶ And thanks Stephen for reminding the inevitable Boppers about this momentous anniversary, and for the delightful idea of sending in pics of celebrations around the world
- ▶ Here is a selfie (it's my first, and I had no idea how difficult they can be), with my Panda Teddy Bear named Pickwick - you can see I loved Dickens even when I was a kid - and a mug from the Philadelphia Dickens Inn - alas, no more. The mug holds root beer; I hope that is okay, but I rarely have alcohol in the house."



"William Hogarth, who was children, had a long association with the Hospital and was a founding Governor. He designed the children's uniforms, the Coat of Arms, he was an inspector for West Indians, and he and his wife Jane fostered founding children. Hogarth also decorated the walls of the hospital with works of art donated by contemporary British artists – the Governors being unwilling to spend money on such ornaments. His example inspired many other contemporary British artists to donate works to this pioneering and philanthropic institution. At this time Britain had no public places for artists to exhibit their works and the Foundling Hospital provided what was in fact the first contemporary gallery of British art. The artists involved with the Hospital were made governors by recognition of their generosity and started to meet them on an annual basis. The idea of exhibiting exhibitions of art under the aegis of a national academy has much debated by the artist, governors and is a key episode in the development of a structure that led to the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768. George Frederic Handel also supported the Hospital's charitable work by giving benefit performances of his work in the Chapel. May I end as we will continue our tour tomorrow."







April 10



- ▶ Andrew Kirschner, of the Philadelphia Pickwick Club, has just posted about his wine cellar. The 'Mr Pickwick' he mentions is a former Chairman of the Club, as all members take on a name of a character in *The Pickwick Papers*.
- ▶ "Just organizing the cellar at 'Chez What North'. It's all Port of varying vintages except for 3 bottles: One is a bottle of cask-strength Scotch bottled in honor of my friend and former Mr. Pickwick, the late Michael Harwood - who gave me my first glass of vintage Port when I was 18 years old..."



- "The other two are bottles of Sloe Gin compounded by Charles Dicken's great-grandson, Cedric Dickens. The bottles are inscribed 'These are the best, strongest and last bottles I will ever make.' Anybody know anything about Sloe Gin? Will it keep indefinitely in a sealed bottle? Should I drink it?"



April 11



- ▶ I have mentioned before that, when I was a kid, I used to read loads of superhero comics, and that this was probably one of the reasons I ended up writing about an illustrator as an adult. When I posted about comic books on that previous occasion, I chose, to represent my fascination, the comic book story *Flash of Two Worlds* which made a big impact on me, as a kid - and chance googling the other day led me to discover a bizarre connection between this story and Charles Dickens. Let me explain.
- ▶ In the 1940s, DC Comics introduced the first incarnation of the super-speeding hero The Flash, as shown on the right of this picture. When superheroes fell out of fashion in the late 1940s, the company dropped the character - but in the 1950s, they revived The Flash, with a new costume and a new identity, as shown on the left of the picture. But then, in 1961, DC brought the two Flashes together: it was explained that the 1940s Flash had operated on a parallel world from the 1960s Flash - hence the *Flash of Two Worlds* story...



- ▶ And one of the villains in this comic book was called The Shade, the somberly-dressed character in this pic, who could manipulate shadows.
- ▶ Well, DC used the idea of parallel worlds extensively after *Flash of Two Worlds*, and they brought back many other heroes who had been dropped in the 1940s. The whole thing got very complicated, with different sets of heroes, from these (and other) parallel worlds, operating separately, but sometimes meeting up. And so, in the mid-1980s, DC decided to simplify everything with a storyline about a cosmic crisis which merged all parallel worlds into one. And, as history was altered in the merged earth that resulted, DC had the golden opportunity of revamping the biographies of all their heroes and villains.



- ▶ There have been more universe-redefining crises on subsequent occasions, and further revamped biographies. And biography-revamping happened to The Shade.
- ▶ So, in 1994, in the comic book shown, The Shade was reinvented as a morally-ambiguous Victorian era immortal. And who should be one of his friends?

April 1



- ▶ A review of *Death and Mr. Pickwick* has just appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*, which I shall respond to tomorrow, because I no longer believe that 'keeping quiet' is the right advice. I have indeed already received the comments of one DaMP fan, which you will see below the review. Anyway, here it is:
- ▶ Reviewed by Adam Abraham, University of Oxford:
Stephen Jarvis. Death and Mr. Pickwick. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015. Pp. . 530.00; £20.00.
- ▶ The artist Robert Seymour is known to posterity for two accomplishments: he created the first illustration of Samuel Pickwick and, in the month of Mr. Pickwick's debut, committed suicide. A definitive life of the artist has yet to be written. In the meantime, there is *Death and Mr. Pickwick*, a novel by Stephen Jarvis.



- Why, none other than the young Charles Dickens, of course! The story shown takes place in 1838 - and, as you can see, Dickens refers to The Shade as his 'old friend', and that he had been looking for The Shade for several weeks. So the likelihood is that The Shade knew Dickens in the very period, from 1836 to 1837, when the author was working on *The Pickwick Papers*!

April 11



- ▶ Peter Stollers continues his exploration of the Founding Museum.
- ▶ "Today we shall continue our tour through the Founding museum with a focus on paintings, art and Dickens."





- ▶ "Charles Dickens grew up near the Foundling Hospital, as it was originally known, and was a supporter of Thomas Coram's home for abandoned and destitute children.



- ▶ "He was so moved by the stories of the children helped by Coram that he raised funds and wrote about the Foundling Hospital in some of his most famous works. Dickens wrote of the Hospital: 'Nineteen years after good Captain Coram's heart had been so touched by the exposure of children, living, dying, and dead, in his daily walks, one wing of the existing building was completed and admission given to the first score of little blanks (foundling children).' Dickens raised awareness of the Foundling Hospital through his work.



The 1837 Dickens moved to Doughty Street, near to the Foundling Hospital, where he would go for regular walks through the grounds. There he wrote Oliver Twist, about an orphan boy, or 'Foundling', as children with no parents to-care for them were known. The book also portrays the character John Brownlow, probably named after the Hospital Secretary at the time, who had himself grown up in its care. Dickens rented a grave in the Hospital Chapel, a vital source of income for the school, and this may have been how he met Brownlow, who collected the poor rents. In Little Dorrit, the character Tattlersham grows up in the Foundling Hospital. And in his play No Thoroughfare, written in 1847, the character Walter Swick grows up in the Hospital's care before being reclaimed. Like Thomas Coram, Dickens was appalled by child poverty, and campaigned against social injustice. He even set up his own charity for destitute women, many of whom would have no action but no living their child to the Foundling Hospital to be brought up. Dickens featured the Foundling Hospital most prominently in an article called *Rescue*, a Mass Club for the journal *Household Words* in 1850. The poignant title was taken from the entry form of the children who entered the Foundling Hospital, which included a space for the child's parent: 'Somewhere well, comfort our tour through the Foundling Museum and meet my wife in a red coat... May I send?'





April 12



- Generally, on this facebook page, I do not refer to Dickens's characters unless they appear in *The Pickwick Papers*. Mrs Gamp, though, would be one of the few exceptions to this rule because she gets a brief, but important, mention in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. In my novel, I suggest that Mrs Gamp's imaginary friend, Mrs Harris, inspired the John Foster fraud, whereby a friend of Edward Chapman was simply conjured into existence, as the "original" of Mr Pickwick, in order to take away credit from Robert Seymour. And the first picture here, drawn by the cartoonist Vicky in 1952, shows a "meeting" between Mrs Gamp and the illusory Mrs Harris.



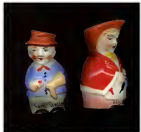
- And looking online, I discovered a few pieces of Pickwickiana in which Mrs Gamp is linked to characters from *The Pickwick Papers*. So, as you can see, there are bookends featuring Mrs Gamp alongside Mr Pickwick...



► ...and also Tony Weller...



- ▶ Events may not have transpired exactly as Jarvis portrays them, but he offers a sympathetic portrait of a troubled man. Of course, if Seymour is to be a sympathetic character, then someone else must be unsympathetic. To pity Sahari, we are obliged to see Mozart as a monster or a buffoon. Three days before Robert Seymour pulled the trigger to end his life, he met (perhaps for the first and last time) Charles Dickens. Was the young author too rough with the sensitive artist? Did Dickens, the single-minded taskmaster bent on success, drive Seymour to an early grave and future oblivion? A suicide note (quoted by Jarvis) implodes the grieving Mrs. Seymour to blame no one. But the question raised by this novel is not who killed Seymour but rather who created *The Pickwick Papers*, which became a publishing and cultural phenomenon like no other.



- ...as well as Sam Weller and Mrs Gamp salt and pepper shakers.



- And I also came across one fascinating piece of solo Gampiana, which I felt I had to post: a cigarette-card showing how to make a shadow-puppet version of the character!

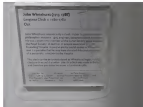


- And the last picture shows Vicky himself, whose real name was Victor Weisz. There is a sombre reason for posting this image - because Vicky, like Seymour, was a cartoonist who killed himself. In 1966, Vicky took an overdose of sleeping pills. The previous day, he had submitted a cartoon of the British politician Denis Healey, which would be used on the cover of *New Statesman* magazine - the same issue that would carry his obituary.

April 12



- ▶ Here is the third in Peter Stadlera's series of posts about the Foundling Museum. These posts have really opened my eyes - I had no idea that the Foundling Museum had such riches, and that, by encouraging the idea of public art galleries, it forms part of the historical background to *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Well done, Peter!
- ▶ "To end our *Death and Mr Pickwick* Tour of the Foundling Museum we will have a look at some fantastic clocks exhibited there (have Pink Floyd's song *Time in your mind* and listen to them striking).









- ▶ "And here is my wife Edla posing in a lovely red Admiral Nelson coat in front of the Battle of Trafalgar
- ▶ (I also had to think about Stephen posing in front of a Nelson statue holding Death and Air Picnic in his hand.)





- ▶ "Also, here is The Court Room where the Foundling Hospital's Court of Governors used to meet. The room is a rococo ensemble of paintings, furniture and interior architecture, designed to make the best possible impression on all future potential governors and donors. The ceiling is a plaster work by William Wilton and the paintings include Hogarth's *Moses before Pharaoh's Daughter* and Gainsborough's picture of London's Charter House.



Pickwickian

- Critics will call *Death and Mr. Pickwick* Dickensian, which is code for long. Perhaps we should call the new work Pickwickian: digressive, heterogeneous, and long. Jarvis, in Pickwickian mode, deploys interpolated tales - short stories, local legends, historical anecdotes. But like some nineteenth-century imitations of *Pickwick*, Jarvis's novel upsets the balance between the center and the periphery: digressions overwhelm the main thrust. Like *Pickwick* itself, *Death and Mr. Pickwick* offers a fictional frame to get things going. A man known to us as Mr. Inbeliccate employs someone he calls Inscriptino (aka Scripty) to write the story of *Pickwick's* origins, based on Inbeliccate's research. Seymour, the main character in the resulting narrative, dies on page 534, with more than 250 pages to go.

April 13



- ▶ The day before yesterday, I posted about comic books; yesterday, I mentioned in passing the way that Dickens and his associates took away credit from Robert Seymour in the creation of Pickwick. Today's post combines both of those topics.
- ▶ You will see here part of the credits for the movie out now, *Superman V Batman: Dawn of Justice*. The significant thing to notice is that the creation of Batman is credited to Bob Kane WITH Bill Finger - and Finger's name appears in the credits for the first time. That "with" represents the culmination of a campaign to get Finger, a writer, acknowledged as co-creator of Batman with Kane, the first Batman comic book artist. I have briefly mentioned Finger on a previous occasion, because his case has always struck me as somewhat analogous to Seymour's, but the new credit for Finger in the movie made me take a fresh look at some of the material online about the creation of Batman.



Bill Finger

BILL FINGER

Co-creator of Batman

(Born: February 8, 1914, Bronx, New York
Died: January 12, 1994, Woodbury, New York
Also known as: Bill Finger, Albert E. T.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Other jobs: Editor of *Wonder Magazine*
Editor of *Amateur*, *Amateur Magazine*

Other jobs: Editor of *Amateur Magazine*
Editor of *Amateur Magazine*

Spouse(s): (1941-1942) (1942-1943)
(1943-1944)

Other jobs: Editor of *Amateur Magazine*
Editor of *Amateur Magazine*

Other jobs: Editor of *Amateur Magazine*
Editor of *Amateur Magazine*

Other jobs: Editor of *Amateur Magazine*
Editor of *Amateur Magazine*

- Kane died in a manner similar to the way that Dickens did, in the 1947 preface to *The Pickwick Papers*. Finger created or co-created many aspects of Batman, including Bruce Wayne's tragic backstory, Gotham City, the Batmobile, the Batcave, Commissioner Gordon, and villains such as the Joker and the Penguin - and indeed Finger wrote hundreds of Batman stories, including the very first story. Even Batman's costume was modified as a result of Finger's suggestions, to include the famous bat-eared cowl and a cloak instead of the stiff bat wings that Kane had originally drawn. Yet none of this was acknowledged. It is believed that Kane struck a deal with DC Comics to give him sole credit for the character.



- In the 1960s, rumors started to emerge that Finger had played a major role in the creation of Batman - just as rumors emerged about Seymour's role in creating Pickwick in the 1830s. Kane's response was to make a public statement: "I'd like to emphatically set the record straight," he declared in 1966, "once and for all, about the many myths and conjectures that I read about myself and my creation, Batman." This is somewhat akin to what Dickens said in his preface: "In the course of the last dozen years I have seen various accounts of the origin of these Pickwick Papers, which have at all events possessed - for me - the charm of perfect novelty."
- In some respects, Kane was even bolder in his lies than Dickens. "I, Bob Kane, am the sole creator of Batman," he stated and, at one point, he even published a comic strip which gave an entirely spurious account of the origin of Batman, as you can see







- ▶ Only in 1989, when Finger had been dead for fifteen years, did Kane soften his position a little, when, in his autobiography *Batman and Me*, he described Finger as "a contributing force" on the series, and admitted that Finger "never received the fame and recognition that he deserved." But when Kane himself died in 1998, the headstone on his grave acknowledged another co-creator - God, who bestowed on Kane the gift of Batman, with Kane allegedly sharing all of Batman's traits: "Bob Kane, Bruce Wayne, Batman - they are one and the same," the inscription proclaimed.

April 13



- ▶ In his latest post, Peter Stadler starts at a pub with a Pickwickian name... discusses Dick Turpin and the novel *Rookwood* (which I have mentioned in previous posts - it was a hugely successful novel prior to *Pickwick*)... and finishes at the Cattle of Yorke pub, which is actually right next door to where the Daffy Club used to meet, in the long-gone Castle Tavern. Great post, Peter!
- ▶ "A Death and Mr Pickwick Tour gets you quite thirsty, especially after a long tour through the Foundling Museum. So why not enter a pub or two with a historic background?"



- "The White Hart (191 Drury Lane, WC2) boldly claims to be 'the oldest licensed premises in London' and reputedly dates back to 1216. It was known as a watering-hole for London's notorious highwaymen and rogues.

THE GENUINE &
HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE
OF
RICHARD TURPIN,
The great Highwayman.

Whereof several copies are kept in the
of John White, at London, April 1, 1739.

By the same Author, published
in 1739, a second Edition, with
many new Additions, and
a new Preface, in which the
Author's Reasons for writing
this History are fully explained.
The second Edition is now
sold by the same Author, at
London, and by all the Booksellers
in Great Britain.

The Author's Name is not
mentioned in the Title, but
it is in the Preface, and in
the Dedication, which is
addressed to the Reader.

Printed by J. White, at the
Sign of the White Hart, in
St. Dunstons Church-yard, London.

- "One of these notorious highwaymen was regular customer Richard (Dick) Turpin whose life later ended in execution for horse theft. The spurious legend of Dick Turpin was established in 1739 with the book *Life of Richard Turpin* and sealed with the novel *Rookwood* (1834) by Harrison Ainsworth in which the highwayman 'Dauntless Dick Turpin' with his horse Black Bess is a secondary character. Well, The White Hart has a colorful past and some good cider.



- Seymour was a successful visual artist with a brilliant idea. He wanted to produce a monthly publication, with images and letters, built around the theme of a fictional London-based club. Other fictional clubs had appeared in print in the eighteenth century, for instance, both Edward Ward and Henry Fielding explored the genre. But Seymour's timing was superb. The publisher Chapman and Hall liked his proposal, and the next is literary history: Seymour had Seymour lived, would Pickwick still be Pickwick? In 1834, his widow, the former Jane Holmes, composed a pamphlet, *An Account of the Origin of the "Pickwick Papers"*. She wrote, "I find there have been no Mr. Seymour, the Pickwick Papers could not have been written; but had there been no Dickens, they would have been written notwithstanding." One wonders by whom? In the words of G. K. Chesterton, "It was quite easy to imagine Pickwick. The difficulty was to write it." James does not quote Mrs. Seymour's pamphlet, even though *An Account of the Origin of the "Pickwick Papers"* could be the novel's subtitle.





- "Later on, I went to the Cittie of York (22 High Holborn, WC1). A pub has been on this Holborn site since 1430.



"It is housed in an atmospheric Grade II listed building with stone floors, a high-ceilinged main bar and small, dark alcoves, old wine barrels and a faux Tudor facade, mixing elements of the old and new. Several features catch the eye, including the cosy booths along the east wall (usually taken by lawyers from the adjoining Gray's Inn), wooden beam ceiling, and the great iron fireplace in the centre of the room – noted as a bit of a mystery as far back as 1962 in Geoffrey Fletcher's *The London Nobody Knows*. Many people know this place today, and it's often standing-room-only in the main bar.

It's famous for its long bar called Henckey's, the former name of this pub in the 1970's, and part of the same-named bar chain. Sam Smith's gave it the name Critic of York when it acquired Henckey's, naming it after a long-demolished pub nearby. Cheers!"

April 14



- Last week, I posted about Alex Joanides' discovery that the artist Robert Cruikshank was the originator of the *Pickwick* forerunner *Life in London*. One relic of *Life in London* is the Tom & Jerry cocktail, invented by Pierce Egan, and named after two of the characters in *Life in London*. I have known about the cocktail for some time - it's a sort of eggnog - and indeed, I sampled the cocktail for the DaWP facebook page.



- ▶ Nowadays, though, the Tom & Jerry is virtually unknown in the UK. However, Tom & Jerry cocktails were apparently very fashionable in the USA in the 1930s and 1940s - with the result that many specialised Tom & Jerry mugs and punchbowls were produced, which turn up on ebay and other auction sites, as you can see from the pics I have posted.













- One question raised by Jarvis's book is the lot of satire. The dust jacket assures us that we are reading "A Novel," but this may be a misleading label: some people still buy novels. Jarvis's book explores the status of non-fiction or at least a non-fiction novel, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*. At times, *Death and Mr. Pickwick* reads like a sketchbook or a series of detached essays on early nineteenth-century print culture. One wishes that it included an index, so that interested readers could trace what Jarvis has to say about "Liger, Porco" or "Pygma in London." At other times, the book reads like a solid reversion of *The Pickwick Papers*. Jarvis retells the incident of Mr. Pickwick and the suspicious colonel, for instance, but adds nothing to Dickens's account. One might as well read the source. In such passages, Jarvis's book is closer to paraphrase or even plagiarism. Indeed, *Death and Mr. Pickwick* is a mislabeled "a book about a book. As one observed character says, "My long life has been dominated by one author—specifically, one book by that one author" (114).



- And it seems the drink is still drunk, to a degree, in parts of the USA, and one can even buy pre-made Tom & Jerry mixes and batters. Perhaps American DaMP fans could give me a better idea of how well-known the drink is in modern America?





- The Wikipedia page gives the impression that the drink is not well-known and in decline – the last ‘Popular Culture’ reference it gives to the drink is the 1960 movie *The Apartment*, in which the Jack Lemmon character says ‘The Tom & Jerry mix is in the refrigerator’





- I find it a slightly amusing thought, though, that people raising a genteel mug of Tom & Jerry to their lips in today's USA will almost certainly not realise that the drink has its origins in the debauched heavy drinking world of Pierce Egan, the Cruikshank brothers and Lyte in London!



April 14



- ▶ Here is a beautiful post by Peter Stadlers on Dr Johnson's cat.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickens* we read about Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). But in this post we shall (upon Sir Peltz's request) fully concentrate on Hodge.
- ▶ Number 17 Gough Square, London, was the home of Dr Samuel Johnson, which he shared with his much loved cat, Hodge.
- ▶ Not many cats have a statue erected in their honour, but opposite the house, which is now a museum, stands a charming bronze of this famous eighteenth century feline. Dr Johnson lived in this house for eleven years, and it was here that he produced the dictionary for which he is famous. Like many writers, he had a fondness for cats. Hodge would have kept him company as he laboured on his mammoth task for years on end.



- ▶ "The book produced by Dictionary Johnson, as he became known, defines The Cat thus:
- ▶ "A domestic animal that catches mice, commonly reckoned by naturalists the lowest order of the feline species."
- ▶ While naturalists may have reckoned the cat a lowly animal, there is no doubt that the biographer had a high regard for his feline friend, for he is recorded as describing Hodge as a "very fine cat indeed." Samuel Johnson's affection for cats in general and Hodge in particular, was recorded by his biographer, Helen Boswell, whose book, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* was published in 1792. In it we learn that the great man of letters objected to his wife berating one of his cats (a preference to Hodge) because "she set a bad example to the servants."
- ▶ As a non-cat person himself, Boswell was much surprised at the "indulgence with which he treated Hodge." Dr. Johnson had such a high regard for his cat it is quite possible if the technology allowed he would have partners in phone and internet about the status of his feline. He would go out himself to purchase owners for the cat. Apparently he did this in case the servants became resentful about doing so and took a dislike to the poor creature.



- "Boswell also writes that he recalled seeing Hodge 'scrambling up Dr Johnson's breast, apparently with much satisfaction', while the Doctor rubbed the cat's back and gently tugged his tail. To his credit, far a non-cattowner, Boswell remarked that Hodge was a fine cat, to which Dr Johnson replied 'Why yes, Sir, but I have had cats whom I liked better than this.' However, upon observing that his poor cat seemed put out, added, 'But he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed.' Boswell does not tell us exactly when Hodge passed away, but we do know that Dr Johnson went out to find some valerian (a plant very similar to catnip) when his cat was dying to make his last hours as pleasant as possible.

- It is not only in Boswell's biography that Hodge lives on. The poet Perceval Shelton wrote *And typic of the Death of Dr Johnson's Favorite Cat...*, from which we learn that Hodge was a black cat:

- Was, by his master when consoled
 Whining his gratitude expressed,
 And never failed his thanks to purr
 Whenever he stroked his sable fur;



- ▶ "A more recent memorial exists in the form of a bronze life-size statue that was unveiled on 26 September 1997, by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Roger Cook. The metal moggie is cat upon a daisiary with oysters at his feet. The delightful edifice was the work of animal sculptor, Jon Buckley, and was modelled on his own cat, Henry. Not much is known about Dr Johnson's other cats except that in a letter written in 1738, he mentions a white kitten by the name of Lily, describing her as very well behaved. On 1st September 1997, No 17 Gough Square acquired a new feline resident, also named Lily. She was chosen from the many cats at the Dogs' Home Battersea. However, apart from her name and place of residence, the modern day Lily has little in common with her 18th-century namesake - the present day Lily is jet black, and is decidedly mischievous. It is good to know that the great writer whose once again knows the soft footfall of a cat about the place, and one suspects that if he could see her, the Doctor would declare that she, too, is 'a very fine cat indeed!'



- "Sir Pelzi is purring enthusiastically about this fantastic feline, but is a bit jealous that Edda and I hugged the statue."

April 15

The Pickwickian Pads of Hopper



- The *Pickwick Papers* has a lot to do with the joy of eating. Of course, one can still love food, and not go as far as Mr Pickwick, and perhaps a good way of introducing today's post is to show a picture of a "fat suit" worn by a rather thin American actor, De Wolf Hopper, who played Mr Pickwick on stage in 1903 - note the dotted lines which show "where Hopper leaves off."



- Ultimately, the generic description that may not best or remain a theme. The argument is that Dickens best or intentionally misled readers in his various Pickwick prefacing Mr. Inglethorp (or perhaps Jarvis) fails to recognize that a preface is a paratext, rather like the editors to Pickwick prospectus, published on 26 March 1836, or even the monthly wrapper, which relates that the new work is "edited by 'him'." In fact, it was written by Charles Dickens. Yet despite our Mr. Pickwick wonders if the misleading prefacing form "the greatest literary hoax in history" (742). The villain is John Fopster, who conceals the beautiful cover up of Leppard's original conception (whatever it was) in order to protect Dickens's reputation and, not incidentally, "the dignity of literature." Jarvis's novel thus reveals the efforts of the Shakespeare doubters (Jas and Sir Horatio). It is not that they are wrong. It is that it does not matter. If conclusive proof eventually shows that Christopher Marlowe or the Earl of Oxford wrote the works we attribute to Shakespeare, they would still be very good plays.



- Towards the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, in one of the modern-day sections of the novel, I mention two TV series which also express a love of food on "gobbling roadtrips": *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives* and *Mon V Food*. I have always thought that the eating establishments featured in these shows could be great places for North American DaMP fans to visit - I would love people to send me pictures of themselves in these establishments, accompanied by the novel, or at least with an image of DaMP's jacket on a phone or laptop screen.



- And it's very easy to find the nearest place to your location featured on the shows: if you go to <http://www.tvfoodmaps.com/> you can find restaurants which have appeared on TV food shows in your location, and if you click on the "TV Shows" tab you can find all those which have turned up on *Diners*, *Drive-ins* and *Dives* and *Man V Food*.



- Well, recently my wife Elaine was in Washington D.C. and she went to Bub and Pop's, which has featured on *Wheels*, *Drive around Drive*. She snapped Death and Mr Pickwick's bookmarks next to the fringe she had for lunch.
- C'mon BubP fans, you can do the same! Send me some pics, please!



April 15



- ▶ *Death and Mr Pickwick* suggests so many possibilities for travel. Following on from yesterday's post about Dr Johnson's cat, Peter Stadlera now takes us inside Dr Johnson's house.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we have some references to Dr Johnson. Well, let's take some time and meet the famous man at home: Dr Johnson's House is a writer's house museum in London in the former home of the 18th-century English writer and lexicographer Samuel Johnson.



- "Built in 1700 by wool merchant Richard Gough, it is a rare example of a house of its era which survives in the City of London and indeed is the only one of Johnson's 18 residences in the City to survive. Five bays wide and five storeys high, it is located at No. 17, Gough Square, a small L-shaped court, now pedestrianised, in a tangle of ancient alleyways just to the north of Fleet Street. Johnson lived and worked in the house from 1748 to 1759, paying a rent of £30, and he compiled his famous *Dictionary of the English Language* there in 1755.

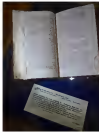


- "In the 19th century, it saw use as a hotel, a print shop and a storehouse. In 1911, it was purchased by newspaper magnate and politician Cecil Harmsworth, who later commented: 'At the time of my purchase of the house in April 1911, it presented every appearance of squalor and decay ... It is doubtful whether in the whole of London there existed a more forlorn or dilapidated tenement.' He restored the house and opened it to the public in 1914. It is now operated by a charitable trust, Dr Johnson's House Trust Ltd.



- "The house features panelled rooms, a pine staircase, and a collection of period furniture, prints and portraits. There are exhibitions about Johnson's life and work. Please enjoy the first part of our tour. Tomorrow you'll see Edda and me dressed in the fashion of that era."









- The strongest evidence to support the view that Seymour "created" Pickwick is that, before *The Pickwick Papers*, he had a tendency to draw (End Page 66) overweight, bespectacled men. Samuel W. Lambart's 1924 book *How the Pickwick Men Fishing makes the classic, proto Pickwick appear in at least two of Seymour's earlier publications, *Alpines and Moors for an Amateur*, and *Elements of Fishing* (1833) and *The Boat of Llandudno* (1834). But what does it mean to create a literary character? If Seymour draws a pudgy merlin rights and gaffers, has he created Samuel Pickwick or is drawing of a pudgy man in rights and gaffers? Neither. Decades later Seymour invented the name Pickwick, that belonged to coach proprietor Messrs Pickwick. Jokes, nevertheless, make a convincing case that the raw materials that were synthesized into Dickens's break-through work were all available by the 1830s: London clubs and gaming operations, Washington Irving and Pierce Egan, Dr. Syntax and Jocko, the theatrical performances of Charles Mathews and Jane Fane. According to the novel, the villainy was Robert Seymour, but in a fit of rage, he burns all the evidence.*

April 16



- ▶ The British artist Peter Jackson, who died in 2003, was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of London. For about thirty years, he produced pictorial newspaper pieces - called *The London Explorer*, *London is Stronger than Fiction* and *Somewhere to Go* - which demonstrated that knowledge, and it is not surprising that occasionally he depicted Mr Pickwick, as you can see in the first three pictures I have posted. Jackson's newspaper pieces were later re-published as books, and today those books are highly collectable.

The George

WILSON STREET

SOUTHWICK



The Leather Bottle

COBBHAM

WENT





- ▶ The fourth of Jackson's pieces in this post may not appear to connect to *The Pickwick Papers*, as it shows Bill Sikes, from *Oliver Twist*, but actually it DOES have a possible connection to *Pickwick*.
- ▶ After murdering Nancy, Bill Sikes flees to Hatfield, and he experiences terrible visions: he imagines that he is pursued by Nancy's eyes. It has always struck me that this was a forerunner to a part of *The Stroller's Tale*, in *Pickwick*. In that tale, the hallucinating clown says to Dismal Jemmy: "All last night, her large staring eyes and pale face were close to mine; whenever I turned, they turned; and whenever I started up from my sleep, she was at the bedside looking at me."



- ▶ And in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I have Seymour reading this section of *The Stroller's Tale*, and the image of the eyes strikes home:
- ▶ "And then he read of the clown haunted by a wife's eyes. 'There's something in her eyes wakes such a dreadful fear in my heart that it drives me mad.' He thought of the carnal acts he had committed with men. There was the dreadful threat of the gallows every time he went with someone. He felt the fear awakened sometimes when Jane looked at him, when she must have guessed what he had been doing."
- ▶ But also, there is a personal connection to Jackson's fourth piece. I used to live in Hatfield - and I frequently visited the *Eight Bells*, the pub that Bill Sikes is thought to have gone to, as Peter Jackson shows. It was in Hatfield indeed that I began writing *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

April 16



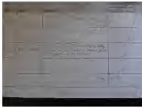
- ▶ This is a brilliant post by Peter Stadiera - he not only continues his trip to Dr Johnson's house, but also Peter and his wife Edda dress in period clothing!!
- ▶ "Johnson's portraits, landscapes and artefacts are a fascinating testament to one of Britain's most witty, charismatic and studied historical figures; an insight into his brilliant mind and colourful life."



- "Go directly to the library (which was probably once Dr. Johnson's bedroom), to flick through a facsimile of Johnson's impressive two-part dictionary. Idiosyncratic entries to watch out for include 'Lexicographer' ('a harmless drudge'), and 'bats' ('a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people'). Other highlights of the house include a beautiful tea set that once belonged to Mrs Thrales, one of Johnson's close female friends (Johnson was known for his partiality for tea); and a portrait thought to be of Francis Barber, Johnson's Jamaican manservant to whom he bequeathed most of his estate.









- "If Dr Johnson was a dedicated follower of fashion we don't know but what I know is that we tried hardest to dress properly in the fashion of that age! It's a fantastic museum and we really enjoyed our visit. If you ever are in London, 'Walk right in!'"



Jarvis is at his best when describing details of nineteenth-century life: the Fleet prison, the processes of book making and etching, and the Pickwick phenomenon itself. The two most vivid characters are not Dickens and Seymour but rather Robert Buss, the unfortunate successor to the late artist, and "Mr H," another obsessive who creates an index and a now-lost concordance to *Pickwick*. (One C. M. Heale produced *An Index to Pickwick*, in 1897.) Admirers of Dickens may feel frustrated by Jarvis, he insists on calling the novelist "Chatham Charlie" and later "Doc," whereas other historical characters are designated by their names. Dickens scholars may further wonder why Jarvis fails to explore Master Humphrey's *Clock*, in which Dickens revived *Pickwick* and the Wollers. But for an in-depth view of nineteenth-century print culture and an exploration of one literary masterpiece's extraordinary impact, *Death and Mr Pickwick* has much to offer.

Death and Mr Pickwick Chronicles - Volume 9

by Stephen Jarvis



April 17



- ▶ The artist John Charles Moggs (1819-1896) was well-known for painting coaching scenes - and the other day, I was delighted to discover that Moggs had painted one of Moses Pickwick's coaches. This was in the picture "Passing Stonehenge", which I have posted today. In the foreground, is a Royal Mail coach, in a livery of red and black, and behind it is Moses' coach - and, although this photo does not show the fine detail, on the coach's door one can apparently read 'PICKWICK BATH'. In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I describe the Pickwick coaches as having a brown and yellow livery, and I believe I found that colour-scheme mentioned in a book on the history of coaching. This photo doesn't really allow one to see the colours very well, but there is certainly yellow there, and what could be two shades of brown.

April 18



- Friday of this week is a very special day: the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Cervantes. It is only right that the *Death and Mr Pickwick* page honours the great Spanish author, because Don Quixote was such an important influence on *The Pickwick Papers*. So, I am delighted that Michael Segers will be doing a series of guest posts on Don Quixote. Over to Michael:
- "I am so glad that Stephen has asked me to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes, whose magnificent novel *Don Quixote* inspired the narrative, structure, and characters of *The Pickwick Papers*. With the great love that I have for both those novels, this is not a task that I undertake lightly.



- "First, consider the novel. The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha is Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote, or, at least, a long title for a long book. Many readers, when confronted with such a book, expect to be misled or sandbagged, but I want to suggest something very different.
- Yes, I know, it is the foundation of Spanish literature, perhaps the foundation of modern Western novels as well, one of the "Great Books," according to whoever has done the latest list. But I think of James Joyce, who suffered through a pretentious American scholar explaining the symbolism of Ulysses to him. Finally, Joyce slapped him on the back and roared, "But, wait a minute!"
- I don't think Cervantes wrote it as the "Great Book" that it is judged to be. He certainly did not contemplate writing the first modern novel. It is a lot of fun, and I think generations of readers have imposed this "Great Book" perspective onto it. Just as with Shakespeare's work, that label of greatness keeps people from enjoying the work.



- "There is so much going on. One adventure or silly fellow follows another. Quixote and his squire, Sancho Panza, ramble through one inn after another, with whores, drunks, and all manner of eccentrics, as they drink, scold, and inevitably get soundly beaten. They are not on a pilgrimage but on a series of road trips, much like the travels of the Pelwick Club.
- That describes Don Quixote, but, again, it does not, because there are two books, titled Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes. The first Don Quixote was published in 1605, but, after someone else, in those days without copyright protection, found it so good, Cervantes published his own second part of Don Quixote ten years later. And it is a much different book. Cervantes has fun with the situation, because in the second book, the characters know about, apparently have read, the first part and comment on it. Cervantes was ten years older, and this was done with some additional year's of wisdom. As poor Quixote returns to sanity, his life fades away, and his death is as poignant as any in literature.



- ▶ "If it is Literature. For me, Don Quixote, like *The Pickwick Papers*, is more than a book; certainly more than just an excuse for a teacher of literature (as I was for twenty years) to ramble on and on... Does Quixote's horse Rocinante indeed represent capitalism... or Calvinism? Both novels are a part of my life, and perhaps I have a touch of pride in saying that I never subjected either of them to my classroom.
- ▶ Although Spanish, Don Quixote has had quite an important influence on British literature: it was first translated into English in 1612, just seven years after its publication, and it has left a lasting influence on English literature in such novels as *Joseph Andrews* by Henry Fielding, *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, *Dr. Loupeloire Greaves* by Tobias Smollett (who also translated Don Quixote), *The Return of Don Quixote* by G. K. Chesterton, and *Montgomer Quixote* by Graham Greene, and, as I have already mentioned, *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens.



- ▶ "Traditionally, it was thought that Cervantes and Shakespeare died on the same day, but there seems to be a confusion of calendars and other factors to suggest that they were not. I wonder what Shakespeare might have done with the novel, which, after all, was translated into English four years before his death. Perhaps Don Quixote might have met Sir John Falstaff, while Sancho Panza and Bottom could have shared some antics.
- ▶ From 1996 to 2006, four new English translations of Don Quixote appeared, evidence that only one book, the Bible, has been translated into English more often than Don Quixote. Of the four, Edith Grossman's 2003 translation seems to have the best reviews. You can download a free copy of Don Quixote in several formats at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/996>.



- ▶ "When Winston Churchill said that the United States and England were two countries separated by the same language, we assumed he meant English, but Don Quixote makes me wonder. In the United States, we usually pronounce Quixote as key-hoe-tee, while in England, the preferred pronunciation was quix-oh-ee, although Dolphyn tells me that that is no longer true.
- ▶ But, Don Quixote brings together all who love literature and Mr. Kent to whatever strange place the mournful knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, may take us, to share his sorrow, as well as periodically, to laugh at him.
- ▶ The picture at the start and end of this page are, respectively, the title page of the first edition of Don Quixote, and the playbill of the Broadway musical, Man of La Mancha, based on the novel.
- ▶ Tomorrow, we will look at the books and literary culture that Don Quixote comes from, how Cervantes used them, and while we are at it, we just might see if that can in some way relate to Death and Mr. Pickwick.

April 18



- ▶ Here is the latest post by the great Peter Stadler, on Garraway's Coffee House. As Peter says, Mr Pickwick wrote his famous "chops and consots (sausage)" note to Mrs Bardell in this coffee house, and this was something I wanted to bring "alive" in Death and Mr Pickwick. In The Pickwick Papers, there was just a note, nothing more, but I wanted to capture the moment at which Mr Pickwick wrote it.
- ▶ "In today's post we'll have a look at the legendary Garraway's Coffee House - its predecessor, Jonathan's Coffee House, which existed from 1680 to 1776, served as London's Stock Exchange.) It has a threefold celebrity: tea was first sold in England here, it was a place of great activity at the time of the South Sea Bubble, and has since been a place of great mercantile transactions. It was opened by Thomas Garraway in Exchange Alley, now known as Change Alley, after the rebuilding of the Royal Exchange area following the fire of 1666.



- It was built on a grand scale, situated on a corner with various entrances into the building, smaller rooms and a kitchen downstairs and a large coffee room upstairs. It had to be rebuilt again after another fire in 1748 and it finally stood down in 1806. All that is now left is a memorial plaque on the original site and a panel on a railway-door at 12 Cornhill, designed by Walter Gilbert (1875-1946), depicting the scene in the coffee house: "Germany's Coffee House, a place of great commercial transaction and frequented by people of quality".





- "It is from this coffee house that Mr Pickwick writes to his landlady about what he wants for dinner. His brief letter - 'Dear Mrs B, chops and tomato sauce, Yours Pickwick' - is later produced as evidence of the fact that he broke a promise to marry her.
- But what has a grasshopper to do with a coffee house? The grasshopper was Thomas Gresham's family symbol (in a forthcoming post I will explain how it came to be so) and appears on a number of buildings in this area, in particular the Royal Exchange. Presumably it indicates that this lovely and very popular symbol was erected by the Gresham family or those connected to their business interests."



- ▶ As I said, I shall reply to this review tomorrow, but I have already shown it to one DaMP fan, and this was the response:
- ▶ "Are you averse to swear words? I think not.
- ▶ What a fucking joke! I heartily disagree with this review. Adam Abraham is off the mark and, in my umble (a la Uriah Heep) opinion, a little too in love with the marketing of "Charlie" Dickens as the jolly father of Christmas and such. The last line is damning praise. He says that DaMP has much to offer after he has panned it!!!"
- ▶ Jeze!
- ▶ It IS a novel, and I read it as such. While it is meticulously researched, it is still fiction. Step back from your high horse and holier-than-thou attitude Mr. Abraham!
- ▶ Just my righteous two cents' worth."

The Virtues of the COFFEE-Shop

It is a place where you can find a good cup of coffee and a good deal of conversation.

The coffee-shop is a place where you can find a good cup of coffee and a good deal of conversation.

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A street scene in London, showing a row of multi-story buildings with many windows. A few people are visible on the street in the foreground.

April 19



- ▶ Here is the second of Michael Seger's wonderful posts in honour of the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Cervantes:
- ▶ "Among the many labels we have tried to stick onto the novel *Don Quixote* is that it is a parody or spoof of the chivalric romances which *Don Quixote* spends so much time reading. To figure out whether that is true, we need to look at Quixote's library and what happens to it
- ▶ In the first five chapters of the novel, we meet Quixada or Quixada or Quixana, a nobleman who has become so obsessed with his library of tales of knights that he decides to become a knight under the name of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, which took him eight days to choose. He and his steed (Rocinante, whose name took him only four days to choose) set out on the first adventure or rally. He is dubbed a knight by a lord of a castle, actually, the landlord of an inn, and ends up thoroughly pummeled by a rouseur and left unable to move



- "By chapter six, a neighboring peasant carries Quixote back to his horse, which he shares with a niece and a housekeeper. With the priest and the barber, they decide that something must be done with his library. In this chapter, we see how "sane" people react to Quixote's books. The housekeeper suggests sprinkling with holy water to drive out all the evil that she is convinced is in it: 'The four books of Amadis of Gaul seems a mysterious thing,' said the curate, 'for, as I have heard say, this was the first book of chivalry printed in Spain, and from this all the others derive their birth and origin; so it seems to me that we ought necessarily to condemn it to the flames as the founder of so vile a sect.' 'Nay, sir,' said the barber, 'I too, have heard say that this is the best of all the books of that kind that have been written, and so, as something singular in its line, it ought to be pardoned.' 'True,' said the curate, 'and for that reason let its life be spared for the present.'



- "Quixote, by extension, Cervantes, takes his books more seriously than just to read them. As fantastic as the books are, if Quixote just lost himself in them, we would not have much of a story. He would not be the sympathetic character that he is, and the novel Don Quixote would not be such an ongoing source of fascination."
- But, what is going on, even after the priest and the barber read up the library, and the housekeeper burns most of the books and tells Quixote that the devil has stolen the room? Although the room and the books are gone, their influence remains. Quixote has his own alternative reality. He has to make the best of an unpleasant reality, even if it means going against the old stories of chivalry. In chapter seven, when he persuades a peasant farmer Panza to be his squire, Sancho wants to bring along his donkey, his ass, because he does not want to walk. This is a problem for Don Quixote, who tries to "tell" to mind any knight errant taking with him an ass mounted on his back, (but no instance occurred) to his memory. For all that, however, he determined to take him, intending to furnish him with a more homeric mood when a chance of a promised thief, by appropriating the horse of the first diseased knight he encountered."



- ▶ "That seems to be the way he deals with what he would consider trivialities (Sancho's steed), while for the important matters (such as his quest), he goes directly to fantasy mode: "Of a truth, it is a great disgrace for us who call ourselves the Twelve Peers, so carelessly to allow the knights of the Court to gain the victory in this tourney."
- ▶ Yet, a few paragraphs down, he draws on his bookish delusion while dealing with practicalities: "Wounded no," said Don Quixote, "but bruised and battered no doubt, for that bastard Don Roland has cudgelled me with the trunk of an oak tree, and all for envy, because he sees that I alone rival him in his achievements. But I should not call myself Renaldo of Montalvan did he not pay me for it in spite of all his enchantments as soon as I rose from this bed. For the present let them bring me something to eat, for that, I feel, is what will be more to my purpose, and leave it to me to avenge myself."



- ▶ "Who is there?" is he a tenuous synthesis of Quixote (the real name), a hungry old man, and Quixote (a name so less real to its bearer), the knight who rivals the other knight in his achievements? That is the intrigue of Don Quixote, the character and the novel. With every clumsy step of Rocinante or every time Quixote and Sancho get beaten up, we do not know whether to laugh or to cry, whether our knight is trapped in our reality or we are. What are we missing?
- ▶ To jump forward to *The Pickwick Papers*, Samuel Pickwick has an otherworldly drive to travel, with an idealistic simplicity and an obsession with books (as often to write as to read) that rivals Quixote's. Fast forward again to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and in *Mr Pickwick*, we see a man who has not only a library but apparently a museum, from which he is always digging out treasures in support of his own quixotic quest...



- ▶ "Today's pictures show: Don Quixote in his library; the priest, barber, niece, and housekeeper dealing with the library; and the now iconic image that Pablo Picasso created of Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, and their mounts.
- ▶ Now, to end with a surprise. There is another library to be explored, the library of songs preserved about the novel. Jordi Savall, such a great musician that I have said we need a Nobel Prize in Music, just so that he could win it, has compiled a two-CD collection of *Los Musicos del Quijote*, a brief and tantalizing preview of which can be found on YouTube:
- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHJNAE8xkE_k

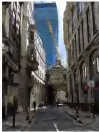
April 19



- Today, Peter Stadlera takes us to Leadenhall Market, a location he had previously posted about. (See post for March 1.)



- "On my way through Leadenhall Market I said hello to Old Tom and went in search of the Green Dragon at 3 Bull's Head Passage, the likely 'original' for The Blue Boar, where Mr Pickwick's faithful valet, Sam Weller, wrote a Valentine to Mary who eventually became his wife in *The Pickwick Papers*. Well you wouldn't think about Sam Weller when seeing the place now. Bull's Head Passage though is well supplied with restaurants and wine bars, but the Green Dragon is no more."



April 1



- ▶ Here is Peter Stadlera's latest post, which deals with a place connected to the judge in the trial of Lord Melbourne - the trial which influenced *Bardell V Pickwick*.
- ▶ "*In Death and Mr Pickwick* we read that Justice Gasalee was buried in the Old Foundling Chapel, Guildford Street.



April 19

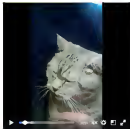


The History and Psychology of Clowns Being Scary

You are not alone in your fear of makeup-wearing entertainers - people have been frightened by clowns for centuries

- ▶ Peter Stadlera has also posted this important article about scary clowns, which mentions *The Pickwick Papers*.
- ▶ http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-history-and-psychology-of-clowns-being-scary-20394516/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=socialmedia

April 19



- ▶ Here is a very special video, in which you can hear the purring of Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat!
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/deathandmrpickwick/posts/833348346799019>

April 20



- ▶ Here is Michael Segers' latest post, in his wonderful series celebrating the 400th anniversary of Cervantes' death:
- ▶ "Don Quixote and Mr Pickwick share something which makes me feel very far from them. Each of them has a servant. Sometimes, as I read earlier literature, I find myself either overwhelmed by servants or, perhaps as people in those days did, I try to ignore them. In Richard Strauss's final opera, *Copacabana* (1942), even a chorus of servants comment on how inappropriate it would be to have servants portrayed in an opera, although there are many servants scattered throughout opera.



MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



- ▶ "In the poem *Maud*, Alfred, Lord Tennyson has his anonymous narrator lament his pecuniary straits by saying, 'I am nameless and poor. / I keep but a man and a maid.' As I look around my house, I wonder what I could find to keep two servants busy, except perhaps helping me maintain my (not-at-all-spoiled) parrot Dory. Then, I remember that earlier in the day, one of my servants pumped water from the well, while another (I am consciously being gender neutral here) did my laundry. Indoor plumbing, electricity, and now the Internet give us more servants than we can count, and we do not have to worry about their gossip.



- ▶ "Although Don Quixote might have preferred a closer relationship with his lady, Dulcinea del Toboso, the strongest relationship in the novel is between the knight and his squire, Sancho Panza. Interestingly, when Mr Pickwick tries to bring up with his landlady Mrs Bardell the prospect of his keeping a servant, she mistakes his words for a proposal of marriage, with disastrous results.
- ▶ Don Quixote and Sancho have a strange relationship, as each represents his own perception of reality. Sancho often reminds his master that he cannot read, and so, he is a stranger and often afraid in the world that Quixote has made and lives in. Quixote, on the other hand, is as much a stranger to the down-and-dirty world in which Sancho tries to keep him safe.



- ▶ "Although *Don Quixote* is sometimes referred to as a picaresque novel, it is in fact an anti-picaresque tale. Granted, the novel is a plotless series of episodes, but since the picaresque, as the hero of a picaresque novel is called, lives by his wits, neither knight nor squire can be said to do so.
- ▶ But, as they ramble through the lower strata of the society, they reflect in many ways the life of their creator, who was a literary man and a military man, who grew up in a very poor household. He had two experiences with prison: for five years as a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire and later in jail in Seville for problems with his accounts as a tax collector. It would be pleasant to think that he might have had a faithful companion such as Sancho, but, if he did, we know nothing of it.



- ▶ "Mr Pickwick, of course, has a very faithful companion in Sam Weller. Perhaps the difference between the two sorts of master and servant (besides the obvious fact that in one the servant, Sancho Panza, is fat, while in the other, the master, Mr Pickwick, is) is that Sam Weller is much more in touch with the world that he lives in and he and Mr Pickwick ramble in their either of the two worlds with the realities of their lives, as tricky as the word reality is when writing about Don Quixote.
- ▶ Of course, the two servants are both known for their humorous speech. But there is a difference. While Sam is known for quick, on the spot, Sancho tends to let the words flow, almost taking on a life of their own.
- ▶ "Hodges don't distrust a good payer," and he whom God helps does better than he who gets up early, and 'tis the tripe that carry the foot and not the foot the tripe, I mean to say that if God gives me help, and I do my duty honestly, no doubt I'll perform better than a perfect day, let them only put a finger in my mouth, and they'll see whether I can talk or not."



- ▶ "Dart is not a good time for servants, although from the high brow novel *Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro to the irrepressible Shirley Booth's television series *Mazel*, they have maintained a niche. So, it may be a surprise to consider two new sets of servants and masters. A self-respecting hobbit such as Frodo Baggins could not have undertaken such an epic quest without his servant Sam Gamgee, and their relationship illustrates a problem in our age. I have seen many suggestions or questions about a sexual element to their relationship, as if we cannot accept a concept of loyalty based on something other than sex.
- ▶ In *Death* and *Mr Pickwick*, *Mr Inbelucate* and *Sompy* are not, strictly speaking, servant and master, but as employer and employee (after an unforgettable job interview), they have a friendship and loyalty that place them in the company of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza and *Mr Pickwick* and Sam Weller.



- "The illustrations for this post include various representations of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, including this pack of cigars...



INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL OF THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

- ▶ "That Chapel is part of the Foundling Hospital in London.
- ▶ The Foundling Hospital was founded in 1739 by the philanthropic sea captain Thomas Coram. It was a children's home established for the 'education and maintenance of exposed and deserted young children.' The word 'hospital' was used in a more general sense than it is today, simply indicating the institution's 'hospitality' to those less fortunate.



- ▶ ...and these bookends. There are many examples of the two on bookends, which, considering how important books are in their story, is very appropriate.
- ▶ Now, please excuse me, because I am a servant, and my master, Imhotep in his gray feathers demands my attention. "



April 20



The Comics Reporter

<http://www.comicsreporter.com>

- ▶ Michael Segers is currently writing great posts for this page about the 400th anniversary of the death of Cervantes. But April 2016 has another significant anniversary. Exactly 180 years ago today, Robert Seymour killed himself.
- ▶ When Seymour's tombstone was unveiled at the Dickens Museum, the Comics Reporter website published this page.
- ▶ http://www.comicsreporter.com/index.php/nest/her_siegel_nor_slusher_is_robert_seymour_the_true_patron_saint_of_victi/
- ▶ asking the question "Is Robert Seymour the True Patron Saint of Victimized Cartoonists?" And I must admit, the recent disgraceful review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* by Dickens Quarterly, in which Dickens's lies are described as non-lies using the academic jargon of "parasitism", says to me that Seymour is still a victim, posthumously.



- ▶ If Seymour had not shot himself, though, it is unlikely that I would have been drawn to the subject-matter of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. There is just something about the combination of talent and tragedy which fascinates. Hollywood biopics get made about suicidal geniuses, not just 'ordinary' geniuses. When the great Dutch soccer star Johann Cruyff died recently, it struck me that I wouldn't be interested in 'The Cruyff Story', no matter how great a player he was; but George Best, whose talent was on a par with Cruyff's, but who drank himself to death, well that's a different matter. Equally, the keyboardist Keith Emerson's suicide last month suggests to me another potential biopic; but without his raising a gun to his head, the harsh truth is that few producers in Hollywood would consider 'The Keith Emerson Story' as a likely box-office draw.



- And tragedy and talent of course haunts the creation of *The Pickwick Papers*. Let me say that I think that *The Pickwick Papers* has the greatest backstory of any work of fiction. It cried out to be turned into a novel itself – as that's what I did. But the history of *The Pickwick Papers* is more than just Seymour's tragedy. It is also the tale of the colossal success of *Pickwick*, which affected so many lives, including mine, of course, my own. It took twelve years to write *David Copperfield* and *Mr Pickwick*, and then I had to wait a couple of additional years, to fit in with publishers' schedules. But I don't regret the time and effort, not for a second. But garbage such as the *Dickens Quarterly* review indicates that there is still work to be done, even after 150 years, before Seymour is given his proper place, both in Dickens's career, and as an important nineteenth century artist in his own right. However, there are positive signs. The review in the *Dickens Fellowship's* journal *The Dickensian* although grudging, and misquoting in many places, did at least say "Dickens is onto something". And, later this year, Professor Brian Maidment will publish the first academic book about Seymour. And we must not forget that the paperback edition of *David Copperfield* and *Mr Pickwick* will soon be out, featuring Seymour's greatest creation, Mr Pickwick, on the cover.



- ▶ And to finish this post, there is a Seymour picture, *Going By Steam*, which in its combination of violence and humour seems to me to capture much of the spirit of Robert Seymour. Indeed, at the beginning of *The Pickwick Papers*, Mr Pickwick talks about "boilers were bursting", thereby making travel dangerous - and this is probably an allusion to the explosions of steam-driven carriages, as shown in Seymour's picture.
- ▶ So, tonight, I shall raise a glass to you Robert Seymour. Your death was a tragedy, but your work lives on.

April 21



- ▶ Here is the fourth post in Michael Sapers' brilliant series celebrating Cervantes.
- ▶ "There are three moments in world literature that are such powerful reflections of the works that they come from, as well as of the main characters in those works, that they have taken on a life of their own. I mention that because one of them is in *Don Quixote*, and even someone who has never read that novel surely already has an image in mind after simply seeing the title of the book.
- ▶ One of these scenes is from Mark Twain's novel *Tom Sawyer*, in which smooth-tongued Tom tricks the other children in town into not only doing his work, whitewashing the fence, but also paying him for the dubious privilege. Another such scene, quite different, involves a skull, not on a pirate's flag, but in the hands of a Danish prince. The prince is Hamlet, of course, the skull belonged to the jester Yorick, and the scene is from William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*.



- "So, what would be a similar scene from *Don Quixote*? Do I even need to give the hint, windmills? Don Quixote attacks windmills, which he sees as giants, and no good comes of the experience (which you can read at the end of this post).
- Strangely, as so often happens in *Don Quixote*, not much of anything comes of the experience, in fact: "then, discussing the late adventure, they followed the road to Puerto Lapice," as if they had not just come through one of the most iconic scenes in Western literature. Instead, we have another illustration of the alternate realities of the knight and the squire. Quixote says, "If I make no complaint of the pain it is because knights-errant are not permitted to complain of any wound," while Sancho admits, "I must complain however small the ache may be."



- ▶ "That may be what makes the image so powerful. Just like the few paragraphs Mark Twain devoted to Tom Sawyer's scheme or the few lines Hamlet speaks over the skull of Yorick, these paragraphs capture so well not only the characters but also the whole story.
- ▶ But, for me, there is a problem. I cannot remember whether, when I first read the three works, I already knew these three scenes, but I suspect I did, just as I suspect most people have, even some who have never read Tom Sawyer, Hamlet, and Don Quixote. I wish I could somehow un-learn these scenes, so that I could read them fresh again, as we cannot do, just as I wish, whenever I am enjoying Rossini's opera, *William Tell*, that I could somehow un-hear what I so long knew as the theme music of *The Lone Ranger* and enjoy Rossini's bolsterous composition as what it is, just one part of the overture to the opera about a heroic archer, not a stand-alone celebration of a masked hero.



- ▶ "So ingrained is the image in our culture that there is a Wikipedia page devoted to "tilting at windmills," which mentions that we have a film, a rock band, and a song of theirs all titled, *They Might Be Giants*, which refers to this incident, and also that Anderson Cooper used this phrase earlier this year in coverage of this year's presidential campaign.
- ▶ Although I am trying to make connections with *The Pickwick Papers* and *Don Quixote*, I have not had much luck today. Thanks to the joys of ebooks, I can report that there is only one reference to windmills in Dickens's work, "On either side, the banks of the Medway, covered with cornfields and pastures, with here and there a windmill, or a distant church, stretched away as far as the eye could see." To me, at least, there is no single image in *The Pickwick Papers* comparable to the windmill scene of *Don Quixote*.



- "The image book includes the classic illustration by Geoffrey Borge, Don Quixote's macho knightly appearance, with Axtaris, and some rather less than reverential interpretations of the work."
- Here is Comanescu's account of Don Quixote's great battle.
- "He sat, somewhat and wide awake, for a sleep he might attain; for a night he was at that moment up and up, and the great sails began to move, somewhere Don Quixote exclaimed: "Though ye speak more than the great Inverness, ye have to reckon with me." Heaving, and compensating himself with all his heart to his lady Dulcinea, imploring her to support him in just a perch, with lance in rest and lowered by the buckler, he dashed at Rocinante's fastest gallop and lay upon the first mill that stood in front of him; but as he drove his lance point into the tail the mill whirled in round with such force that it showered the lance to pieces, sweeping with it horse and rider who were riding over on the plain. In a noisy confusion Sancho hurried to his assistance as fast as his legs could go, and when he came up found him unable to move. "God bless me!" said Sancho, "Oh I've told your worship to mind what you were about, for they were only windmills!" "Hush, friend Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "that same sage friend who carried off my study and books, has turned those stones into mills in order to rob me of the glory of vanquishing them."



- “Nevertheless, one of the top priorities of the committee at the Foundling Hospital was children’s health, as they combated small-pox, fevers, consumption and dysentery, all of which drove up mortality rates and risked epidemics.

April 21

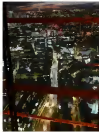


- ▶ Here is Peter Stadlera, accompanied by his wife Edda, reading the recent *Big Issue* article about *Death and Mr Pickwick* in a great location in London! Cheers, Peter and Edda! I love the idea of *Death and Mr Pickwick* being mentioned in high places!
- ▶ "In today's post we have a *Big Issue*. Is there a better place to read a fine article on Stephen's masterpiece than at a table with a fantastic view in the highest restaurant of London, the Duck & Waffle, on the 40th floor of the Heron Tower in the City of London (110 Bishopsgate, London EC2)? As you can see we had a splendid dinner, with some fine wine and enjoyed some breathtaking views over London. The last picture is taken from the outside elevator. With *Death and Mr Pickwick* in the highest spheres - cheers!"









April 22



- ▶ Well, it is the big day: the 400th anniversary of the death of Cervantes. Below is Michael Segers' brilliant final post, in a Fabulous series - thank you so much, Michael, for these wonderful posts.
- ▶ "Welcome to the fiesta, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes (or Don Miguel, as I shall call him today, to share with him the name I sometimes would let my students in my Spanish classes call me). I seem to take a page from the Roman Catholic Church, which commemorates its saints not on their birthdays but on their deathdays, when they leave the Church Militant (on earth) to take up their place in the Church Triumphant (in heaven). So, join me in celebrating Don Miguel's entry into that big library in the sky, where, perhaps, the winged librarians will allow a little noise.



The location of Convent. (Source and other illustrations are brought to us by the Instagram user)

► "Any day is a good day for celebrating Don Miguel's achievements. In the past couple of years, however, we have gained a new perspective on his death, because he chose to be buried in a convent of a small order of cloistered nuns, who had helped his parents pay his ransom after five years of imprisonment by the Ottoman Empire. His body has been found, still in the same convent, looked over by the same order of nuns, after investigators used radar to look into the floor of the convent to locate his body. So, the nuns today might remember nuns who remembered nuns who remembered nuns... back four centuries. If they still share anecdotes about Don Miguel, they have not told anyone. (Learn more about his grave: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31850032>.)



- "I like to imagine that there was one place the radar did not penetrate, a tiny cell visited only by two of the nuns, where there is an ancient nun, sleeping, perhaps, breathing, perhaps. Her family forced her behind the thick walls and seldom opened the gates of the convent after she had lost her virtue and the family's honor in the arms of Don Miguel. She made a vow that she would never leave him. So, he died and was buried in the convent, but she did not die. She lived on and on, and gradually, she seemed to become something other than human. Just as Don Quixote lay awake for hours, contemplating his unattainable love, she lies, neither awake nor asleep, for months or years or centuries, contemplating her near but lost love. Sancho Panza would believe that story, and Don Quixote would appreciate it.



- ▶ "These five days of contemplating Don Miguel, I have felt a closeness to him in my own life. Like William Dean Howells, who wrote about his youthful discovery of *Don Quixote* and his later return, I am aware of the change and growth in my relationship with Don Miguel. You can read Howells's brief but touching essay:
- ▶ <http://www.online-literature.com/william/literary-passions/3/>.



- ▶ "I honestly have only one entry on my bucket list, to learn horseback riding. Perhaps Don Miguel will inspire me to find a broken-down Roderante to amble slowly with me. In my current life, I seem to be Roderante myself, offering my shoulder for my parrot Dory, who seems to fancy himself a knight-errant in gray feathers (perhaps not a parrot-errant, but surely the official Death and Mr Pickwick parrot), as I sally through the house as his steed.
- ▶ I need to add another entry to the list, to re-read Don Quixote, not only to re-read it, but - dare I say it - to attempt to read at least a little of it in Spanish. Although I became proficient enough in Spanish to teach it and to face a month in Buenos Aires (where, it seemed, most people spoke English better than I), I have never read but one sentence of Don Quixote in Spanish.



Table with multiple columns and rows of text, likely a list or directory. The text is too small to read accurately but appears to be organized in a structured format.

- ▶ "With their energies focused on maintaining a disinfected environment, providing simple clothing and fare, the committee paid less attention to, and spent less on, developing children's education. As a result financial problems would hound the institution for years to come, despite the growing 'fashionableness' of charities like the hospital.

Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote



- "Buenos Aires gave me an unexpected connection to Don Quixote, because I one day found myself sitting at the typewriter of the great Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges. Whether it was the typewriter on which he wrote his mind-bending little story, *Pierre Menard Author of the Quixote*, I do not know. I do know that as great a surprise as it was to find myself at Borges's typewriter, it was quite a surprise to find in *Death and Mr Pickwick* a reference to that story, "which concerns a man who reproduces, word for word, a fragment of that great work of literature - not as an exercise in copying but as a creative act of supreme audacity, with the author having never read the original." I hope you are intrigued enough to read that amazing story:
<https://www.coldbeacon.com/writing/borges-quixote.html>.



- ▶ "Don Quixote is a living presence in so many ways. As I have already mentioned, in recent years, we have had four new English translations of *Don Quixote*, a novel which continues to inspire so many people in so many ways. Although such ventures sometimes seem cursed, he has attracted quite a few filmmakers. The image here is of Jean Rochefort as Don Quixote in *Lost in La Mancha*, a documentary about Terry Gilliam's attempted filming of *Don Quixote*. After almost two decades, Gilliam is going to try again to make a film about *Don Quixote*.



- "The black and white image with the motorcycle is of Francisco Reiguera as Don Quixote in Orson Welles's incomplete film of *Don Quixote*.



Adventures of Don Quixote (~1933) Full Cinema Movie

- ▶ "The black and white image of Don Quixote in a helmet which is at the start of this post is from G.W. Pabst's *Adventures of Don Quixote* with opera singer Feodor Chaliapin in the title role. While Gilliam and Welles never completed their *Don Quixote* films, Pabst made his film three times: in English, French, and German, and you can enjoy the English version online:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8hTn6Czp2g>.



- ▶ "There are many musical works inspired by *Don Quixote*. For now, I will share two, with the hope you will look for others. French composer Jules Massenet composed an opera *Don Quichotte*:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IM28Rp3tTaE>.



Jacques Brel - Le Quixote

- ▶ "Perhaps, at least in the United States, the best-known musical adaptation of *Don Quixote* is the Broadway musical *Man of La Mancha*. Belgian singer/songwriter Jacques Brel was so enchanted by this play that he translated it into French, directed it, and in his only musical theater performance, played the title role. You can hear him singing the best-known song from the play in his translation and in his distinct voice:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2kn0Q3UHDc>.



- "Although my celebration of Don Quixote's death draws to a close, my celebration of his life and work is not going strong. I first discovered Don Quixote and The Pickwick Paper's own Ball a century ago, as much as I cherish Don and Mr. Pickwick and appreciate the achievements of its author, I do not have a relationship of such duration with the new novel as I have with the first two. Still, last night, when my parrot Gary had called it a night, and I was getting ready to, I saw Don Quixote and Sancho Panza sitting at the table on my back porch. Sam Miller held open the screen door, and as Mr. Pickwick filed the doorway, he pointed at the ceiling fan and reached for his notebook to comment on the strange object. Don Quixote burst into laughter and said something I could not hear through the glass, but I imagine he called it a trophy from one of the giants he met on the plain. Sam gently pushed Mr. Pickwick onto the porch, because Sancho and Mr. Miller were waiting behind him. As Mr. Pickwick sat, he caught my eye and gestured to me. I opened the sliding glass door and heard them all calling for glasses. They pulled out several bottles, and I was reduced to serving servants and readers alike. When I was not needed, I sat on a stool in the corner, taking in their tales, and then... I woke up... or maybe, I fell asleep.

**Yo soy
Uno de los
400 de**



<https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/illustration/400th-anniversary-of-don-quixote-1600500000>

1600 - 2000

- ▶ "A final point: I mentioned that there is one sentence of *Don Quixote* that I know in Spanish, a sentence that for me is appropriate for each of the three great novels referred to in the previous paragraph. 'El que lee mucho y anda mucho, ve mucho y sabe mucho.' One who reads much and walks much, sees much and knows much.
- ▶ Don Miguel, I do not say ¡Adiós! (good-bye), but I do say, ¡Hasta la próxima! (till next time), although someone else must take responsibility for celebrating the 500th anniversary of your death."

April 22



- ▶ I love the details in this post by Peter Sheldrake – such as “Vauxhall fairs, “the dark redox” because if one is to capture a sense of life, details are SO important.
- ▶ “We’ve already had a post on the Vauxhall Gardens. But on my recent Decade and Mr Pickwick Tour I saw a very interesting exhibition about the Gardens in the Museum of London so I want to rekindle your interest in that fantastic place.
- ▶ Where did 18th-century Londoners go to have a good time and relax in the summer months? They gravitated to pleasure gardens, which were new and opposing earlier formalist spaces in the city. The most popular pleasure garden was one at Vauxhall. Each year, at the beginning of May, it opened its doors to the public. As it was located on the south side of the river, people arrived either by carriage, crossing over Westminster Bridge, or hired a waterman, at one of the city’s Thames-side stairs, to row them there by boat. You had to pay an admission fee of one shilling (five pence) to enter. Inside, there was an enclosed space with trees, lined walks, fountains and outdoor lighting. An orchestra and singers performed the latest music from a raised bandstand.



- "Food and drink were served. The most famous item on the menu was 'Vauxhall ham'. It was so thin that it was claimed you could see through it if you held it up to the light!



- "The Foundling Hospital still has a legacy on the original site. Seven acres of it were purchased for use as a playground for children with financial support from the newspaper proprietor Lord Rothermere. This area is now called Coram's Fields and owned by an independent charity, Coram's Fields and the Harmsworth Memorial Playground.



"There were supper boxes decorated with painted scenes. Looking out from them, diners could observe the fashionably dressed clientele as they promenaded up and down.



- "The evening often ended with a firework display. When it became dark, a whistle was blown and a number of the garden employees touched matches to fuses and, as if by magic, the garden was suddenly illuminated by over a thousand oil lamps.



- "Later in the evening, the bolder visitors would stray into the area known as 'the dark walks', the site of amorous liaisons. You can stroll through the Museum of London's beautifully recreated 18th century pleasure gardens or, visit the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, now a public park which underwent a regeneration project and was re-opened last year. Now you deserve some Vauxhall ham..."

April 22



- Here is the latest post by Peter Stadlera. When I look at the theatrical posters, I realise that there are so many things, related to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, which are collectable. I think DaMP represents a goldmine of opportunities for people who have the urge to collect. And Peter's contribution to this page is IMMENSE. Well done once again, Peter.
- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about the Astley Theatre, an immensely popular place of entertainment at the time. It opened in 1773, when the entertainment was at first mainly provided by Astley himself and consisted of showing his horsemanship, assisted by a clown and some music.

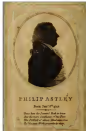


- ▶ "According to Peter Cunningham in his *Handbook of London. Past and Present* (1850) 'transparent fireworks, slack-rope vaulting, Egyptian pyramids, tricks on chairs, tumbling, &c., were subsequently added, the ride enlarged, and the house opened in the evening'. In 1824, *The Memoirs of J. Decastro, Comedian* was published which contained 'an analysis of the life of the late Philip Astley, Esq.' Jacob Decastro had switched in 1786 from Astley's competitor 'The Royal Circus', run by Charles Dibdin, to Astley's where he was engaged as a performer in various burlesques, musical farces, and pantomimes.



- "Dickens wrote one of the *Sketches by Boz* on Astley's theatre, not commenting so much on the actual performance, but more on the spectators and discrepancy between the glamorous outfits the actors wore on the stage and the threadbare appearance of their clothes when they were standing outside the stage door in between performances. He also mentions one of the equestrian performers by name, Miss Woolford, whom, I assume, is the later wife of Andrew Ducrow. The theatre continued to be popular long after Astley's death in 1814. Its final owner was 'Lord' George Sanger, who bought it for £11,000 in 1871 and ran it as 'Sanger's Amphitheatre' for over 10 years. It finally closed and was demolished in 1893. The location of the theatre was Westminster Bridge Road in Lambeth."





April 22



In the footsteps of Cervantes, the Shakespeare of Spain
Shakespeare and Cervantes died only two years apart.

FROM TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

- ▶ Peter Stadlera has also found this very interesting article on Cervantes.
- ▶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/spain/madrid/articles/in-the-footsteps-of-cervantes-the-shakespeare-of-spain/?sf24823149=1>

April 23



- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I mention 'gin palaces' - nineteenth-century slang for attractive drinking establishments, whose aim was to use décor to bring in more customers. Well, last week, Elaine and I went to Birmingham, and for the first time ever we encountered a modern pub, The Jekyll and Hyde, which has an upstairs nineteenth-century style gin parlour. We couldn't resist doing Pickwickian research there.



- "The Foundling Hospital itself bought back 2.5 acres of land in 1937 and built a new headquarters and a children's centre on the site. Although smaller, the building is in a similar style to the original Foundling Hospital and important aspects of the interior architecture were recreated there. It now houses the Foundling Museum, an independent charity, where the art collection can be seen.





- The food was fantastic - I had baked camembert and fig tart as my starter...



- ...apple stuffed pork loin as my main...



- ...with the cheese board to follow.



- But if I had to choose one thing which was the masterpiece of the evening, it was the Road to Ruin cocktail. The reason I went for that cocktail was that the poem, The Road to Ruin, is mentioned in Death and Mr Pickwick.
- As you will recall, I show the young Dickens watching the play, and a character called Goldfinch comes on stage, who adopts a staccato speech pattern, similar to Mr Jaggs's, whenever he gets on to the subject of horses. Goldfinch was also notable for saying "That's your sort" which became a catchphrase in London when the play was first performed, and spread like wildfire across the city. Indeed, I considered including a scene about the spread of "That's your sort" in Death and Mr Pickwick, as it seemed a fair comment of the way that Sam Weller's headlines spread across the city, when Fanny's took off, though in the final version of the novel I dropped the link.
- Anyway, the taste of the Road to Ruin cocktail is very much Mr sort!! It combines Portobello gin, muddied, rubeen, orange and a tonade sugar-dipped rim. Do check out the Jekyll and Hyde's website.
- <http://www.thejekyllandhyde.co.uk>

April 24



- ▶ In Birmingham, there is the Pen Museum, where you will find Pickwickiana!
- ▶ The Pickwick Pen was introduced in 1866, by the manufacturers Cameron and Macniven. It was famously associated with an advertising slogan which mentioned three pens made by the company:
- ▶ "They come as a boon and a blessing to men,
The Pickwick, The Owl and The Waverley pen."

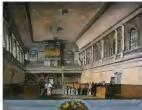


- ▶ The Pickwick had a turned-up point, like the Waverley, though was finer - The Owl had a turned-down point - and was still being manufactured in the early twentieth century, though eventually sales fell to moderate levels, and at the end it was mainly used by certain government and railway offices. A pen which copied the Pickwick pen was used in Japan, but owing to lack of trademark protection, and prohibitive import duties, Cameron and MacIver reaped no benefit from Japanese sales.
- ▶ The Pen Museum is a fascinating place - one of the best 'small museums' I have visited. For details of admission, check out their website: <http://penmuseum.org.uk/>
- ▶ More from Birmingham tomorrow. (Thanks to Jamie Johnston for telling me about the Pen Museum.)









- "The original charity still exists as Coram, registered under the name Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, and is one of London's largest children's charities, operating in adjacent buildings constructed in the 1950s. Elements of the Hospital's routine make appearances in Charles Dickens's 1830s novel *Oliver Twist*, even though Oliver was not placed in the Foundling Hospital itself.



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April 24



- ▶ Peter Stadlera's posts are so informative. I had never heard of the Shoeblack Society, which is mentioned in his latest post.
- ▶ "We all know that Sam Miller was a bootblack and we also know that at the age of 11 young Dickens was sent, by a father and mother whose finances were out of control, to earn 5 or 6 shillings a week in a boot-blacking factory (Women's Blacking Factory), pasting labels onto pots of blacking. Soon after, his father was arrested for debt and sent to the Marshalsea Prison; then the family home was given up and Dickens's mother and siblings moved into prison with his father. He was left to wander the streets, to fend for himself, vulnerable to the sort of fate that later befell Oliver Twist. In his fragment of autobiography, not published until after his death in 1870, Dickens wrote of the trauma of this time of his life, and the impact it had on shaping his character.



- "Concern for the welfare of poor, unprotected children led to the foundation of the Shoeblack Society in the 1850s, which taught children the trade, and was supported by Dickens.



- "Here we see Gray's Inn Lane, 1885. In 1827, Dickens was sent to work as a clerk at Gray's Inn for a friend of his father's. He later described it as 'one of the most depressing institutions in brick and mortar known to the children of men'. These houses on the lane were demolished to widen the road in 1878-9.



- "But back to the Shoeblack Society: The East London Shoeblack Society was established on July 31st, 1854, one of a dozen or so Shoeblack Brigades established in London in the mid-19th century to provide employment and accommodation for homeless and destitute boys. The Society was based at 4 Mansell Street, Whitechapel, (renumbered as 96 in about 1869) where accommodation was provided for up to 80 boys, mostly aged from 13 to 16.



- "Dickens explains that 'When he was handed over to the workhouse, a "token" was left, as well... though not through the Hospital's properly regulated system... by which his mother, had her fortunes improved, might have re-claimed him.' Oliver was sent out to work by the workhouse, with the workhouse obtaining financial benefit from his employment. In what might be another connection, Mr. Bumble's famous objection to workhouse boys having meat in their diet - "It makes them 'wicked!'" - could have found its way into the story as a nod to the fact that the Foundling Hospital's regulations specifically state that the children should have meat at some meals, while other meals should consist of "Roots or herbs".



- As a follow-up to Peter's post, Ian Keable has posted this similar blacking advert, in which a cockerel is substituted for the cat.

April 25



- ▶ The cricket match in *The Pickwick Papers* has inspired several cricket clubs around the world to call themselves The Pickwick Cricket Club. There is one in Barbados, for instance, which has supplied two captains of the West Indies team. There is another in Los Angeles. In Switzerland, there is even a *Mr Pickwick* twenty20 cricket league, whose participating teams compete for a *Mr Pickwick Cup*. There is also a Pickwick Cricket Club in Birmingham, whose ground I passed the other day.



- I am afraid I know next to nothing about cricket, but I have managed to find a series of six oil paintings online by the artist Dave Thomas, which show cricketing characters from *The Pevensie Papers*.









- Also, here is a cricketing picture by Robert Seymour, from a book mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, *In School and Out of School*, published in 1825.



- Seymour also drew Lord's Cricket Ground for the frontispiece of the 1833 book *The Young Cricketer's Tutor* by John Hyren.



- And here the original sketch for the picture, which is in the museum at Lord's. I have indeed heard it stated that Seymour was the first person ever to do a cricketing illustration. I wouldn't be able to say whether that is true or not, but it could be true, because the first fully illustrated book on cricket, *Felix of the Bat*, did not appear until 1845.

April 25

Warren's Blacking Factory



- ▶ Peter Stadlera's latest post says more about blacking...it forms an excellent pair with his post of yesterday.
- ▶ "On our *Death and Mr Pickwick* tour today we start at Charing Cross railway station in the centre of the city. Much of Dickens's formative experience came from working at Jonathan Warren's blacking, or boot polish, factory when he was 12 years old. (He pasted labels on ceramic pots while his father John was in jail for unpaid debts, as I mentioned in my last post.) The factory was at the since-demolished Hungerford Stairs on the Thames, where the train station stands today.

April 2



- ▶ Yesterday, I posted the review of *Drath and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*. I want to say some things in response. This will take more than one day.
- ▶ Let me begin by replying to the statement which is probably the gravest accusation made by the reviewer: "At times, the book reads like a pallid rewrite of *The Pickwick Papers*. Jarvis retells the incident of Mr. Pickwick and the pugnacious cabman, for instance, but adds nothing to Dickens's account. One might as well read the source."
- ▶ This is demonstrably wrong, and I am not indulging in nit-picking, hair-splitting or blatant self-justification when I say that. There is a major point to be made here.

March 31



- Here is a picture of me with *Death and Mr Pickwick* fans John Stafford Ricketts and Lord John Bird, along with Lord Bird's son Sonny, raising a glass in honour of *Mr Pickwick's* 180th birthday. The picture was taken in the Magpie and Stump pub, near the Old Bailey in London, and we chose that pub for three reasons: 1) There is a pub called The Magpie and Stump in *The Pickwick Papers*...





- "From Charing Cross, dogleg a block to Buckingham Street, lined with pretty, well-preserved redbrick Georgian houses. An office complex at number 15 was once a lodging place for Dickens along with Mrs Crupp, his landlady, as well as the first residence of the fictional David Copperfield, a character in Dickens's eighth novel, *The Personal History, Adventures, Experience and Observation of David Copperfield the Younger of Blunderstone Rookery*.



- "Be sure to check out the adjacent, large stone watergate, dating from Dickens's day, which was a passageway to river docks before city officials pushed the border of the Thames southward in a bid for more real estate.



- "Going up the street and turning right into The Strand we have a look at The Adelphi today. The young Dickens loved The Adelphi, and many of his novels were dramatised here without his permission, often before the endings had been written..."

April 25

Michael Kavana



- ▶ The blog <https://mikekane.com/> has just mentioned *Death and Mr Pickwick*. This is what is said:
- ▶ "Stephen Jarvis's *Death and Mr. Pickwick* did not win the Pulitzer. It should win something else: The Rambling Prize for Catering to Literary-Headed Readers Who Love Literary Eccosystems and Get-Connecting. Hey, that's right! This 800+ page is so ambitious, so full of trivia, with so little plot (Robert Seymour becomes England's premier cartoonist/carcaturist/illustrator, only to have his Mr. Pickwick idea hijacked by the writer of the copy, Charles Dickens, and in despair he commits suicide, and Dickens and publisher then claim all the credit for the surprise success of the "novel"), and so deliberately impeded on a Pickwickian amorgasbord of characters and vignettes, that it can feel overwhelming. The book easily makes you want to stay up all night, finding Seymour's priets on Wikipedia, on eBay (I can buy one for only \$100... hmmm), and learning ever more historical trivia. Gadbooks!"

April 26



- ▶ I TRY SNUFF FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER TWENTY YEARS!
- ▶ There is a lot of snuff consumed in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I have tried snuff before - when I was writing about unusual leisure activities, I entered the British Snuff-Taking Championships - but just that once, and never since. Well, when I was in Birmingham recently, for the first time ever I came across a pub, The Wellington, that sold boxes of snuff. What could I do but conduct Pickwickian research? Check out the video:
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/deathandmrpickwick/videos/836310313169489/>

April 26



- ▶ Peter Stadlera now takes us to the area of London where *The Pickwick Papers* was first published, by Chapman and Hall. I like the old photo showing WH Smith - I had no idea that this British bookseller (which even today runs a chain of nationwide stores) took over the Chapman and Hall premises.
- ▶ "Our Death and Mr Pickwick" tour led us to the location of the publisher of *The Pickwick Papers*. Chapman and Hall were located at 186 Strand, London. Dickens ended his relationship with Chapman and Hall in 1844. William Hall fell ill suddenly and died at the firm's office on Sunday, 7th March 1847, aged forty-six.



- "In 1852, when W. H. Smith needed larger quarters, Chapman and Hall vacated their offices at 186 Strand and moved to 193 Piccadilly.



- ▶ "Despite losing Dickens, the company continued to prosper. Their literary adviser, John Forster, helped them to obtain several high profile authors, including William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Carlyle, William Harrison Ainsworth, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Kingsley, Arthur Hugh Clough, Robert Browning and Charles Lever. In 1839 Dickens broke with Bradbury and Evans and returned to Chapman and Hall. On the retirement of Edward Chapman in 1864 Frederic Chapman became the new head of the company.
- ▶ In 1865 Chapman sold a third of the company to Anthony Trollope (1818-1870), who passed it on to his son, Henry Morville Trollope. Chapman and Hall published Dickens' last two novels, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). Three months before his death, Dickens signed an agreement with Chapman and Hall confirming their shared ownership of Dickens' copyrights. Frederic Chapman died of influenza on 1st March 1885 at his London house, 10 Devonian Square. Well, the site of their offices looks completely different now."

April 27



- ▶ The Electric Light Orchestra have a new album out, as you can see on Peter's Stadler's T-shirt, and here are Peter and Sir Pelzi using that to make an analogy with *Death and Mr Pickwick*!
- ▶ "ELO have a fantastic new album out. It's called *Alone in the Universe*. With Stephen's masterpiece *Death and Mr Pickwick* you'll never walk alone and aren't alone in the universe. You have the universe in your hands actually! THANK you STEPHEN for that literary treasure island!"



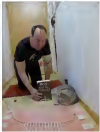
Illustration by John Leech

CHARLES DICKENS

The Pickwick Papers

- ▶ When I first read *The Pickwick Papers*, and I came across the incident of the pugnacious cabman, I can remember being rather mystified by the central event, in which the cabman reacts very strangely when Mr Pickwick asks the age of the horse - and this is the incident which leads to the punch-up, and to Jingle's rescuing of Mr Pickwick. I suspect that most modern-day editors of *The Pickwick Papers* are mystified by it too - or at least do not fully understand what is going on. Certainly, there is no adequate explanation in the notes to the Penguin edition of *Pickwick*, edited by Mark Wormald, which I imagine is the most widely-read modern edition of *Pickwick*. (This edition was the recommended one at the 2007 Dickens Universe on *Pickwick*.) Nor is it explained in another well-known edition of *Pickwick*, the OUP edition, edited by James Ransley. Indeed, off the top of my head, I cannot recall seeing the incident being adequately explained in *ANY* edition of *Pickwick*. So the advice that you "might as well read the source" just doesn't help.



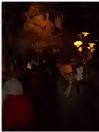
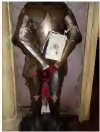


April 27



- ▶ The *Death and Mr Pickwick* facebook page has now been running for nearly eighteen months, and during that time I have been accompanied on my Pickwickian travels by the UK hardback copy of the novel, which (as some of you have noticed) has been getting tatter and tatter.
- ▶ With the launch of the UK paperback imminent (on May 12), I thought it was time to retire the hardback, and so the trip to Birmingham, which I have covered over the last few days, was its final mission.
- ▶ Just before we left Birmingham, we took the hardback to the Bacchus bar and restaurant - named of course after the Roman god of wine, who gets mentioned in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Bacchus is a real find, and as you can see, I really enjoyed going there, with the hardback putting in a fine final performance.







- However, like Mr Inbelicate at the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, the handback whispered to me that it was very tired, and had to let its young friend, the bookmark, do the shot of the fresco.



- The hardback made one last appearance at Maidenhead station, and then collapsed onto the platform - dead.





- And so, time to launch its successor, the UK paperback with its new take on the 'aged paper' look. I discovered recently that Thomas McLean, the printshop owner who appears in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, had published a print, *A View of Toplow from Maidenhead Bridge*, by the artist Robert Havell (1769-1832), which, astonishingly shows the very area of Maidenhead where we live. Our apartment building would rise on the left bank over 150 years later, and indeed opposite the little island you can see in the Thames (such an island is called an 'ait', sometimes spelt 'eyot'), there is now the Thames Hotel, where Elaine and I often go for a drink in the evening.



- ▶ As you can see by comparing the print to the modern picture, Haveli has used a little artistic licence in depicting the Thames, as there is not an EXACT correspondence between the two vistas. But anyway, we thought it was an appropriate place to launch the new edition of the novel.
- ▶ But strangely enough, as we stood on the bridge, a red kite - a bird of prey that flourishes in Maidenhead - flew at us, and came within about ten feet. I have to say, it was pretty scary, and I might easily have dropped the book in the Thames. The bird was perhaps attracted by the red on the cover, which could have looked like blood.
- ▶ Or perhaps Dickens has been reincarnated as a red kite, and was seeking to sabotage the book's mission...



- ▶ You have to read very widely in the secondary and academic literature on *Pickwick* before you discover the solution to the mystery. Jonathan H. Grossman's *Charles Dickens's Networks: Public Transport and the Novel* is one of the few places that explains what's going on.
- ▶ The key to the incident of the pugnacious cabman is Martin's Act, a pioneering piece of legislation, which made it a crime to treat certain animals, including horses, cruelly, or to inflict unnecessary suffering upon them.



Richard Martin – MP & Animal Rights Campaigner

- ▶ The cabman obviously feared that Mr Pickwick was an informer, acting on behalf of an animal-welfare organisation. This would have been understood by readers in Dickens's time, but few modern readers will know about it, unless they take a special interest in the history of animal welfare, and so most readers will not truly understand the incident of the pugnacious cabman if they read *The Pickwick Papers*. But there is one thing they CAN do: they can read the explanation in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I very deliberately mentioned *Martin's Act*. This in itself refutes the reviewer's statement about adding "nothing to Dickens's account".



- Moreover, Martin's Act is not the only important additional information which appears in this part of *Death and Mr Pickwick*. For instance, I mention a contemporary warning about "adventurers", which provides a context for Jingle's appearance. I also provide an explanation for the peculiar apparatus that the piersman carries - the spinning dial - which appears in Seymour's picture, but is not mentioned in Dickens's text at all.
- So let me ask you: how on earth can I be said to add nothing to Dickens's account? I think that, far from this section of my novel being "padded", you will find a vein of richness in *Death and Mr Pickwick* which simply does not exist in *The Pickwick Papers*, at least for modern-day readers, who will not automatically understand the historical context of the pug-nacious cabman incident. That the reviewer should choose this very section of *Death and Mr Pickwick* as demonstrating his point is, frankly, laughable.
- I'll say more tomorrow.

April 2



- ▶ Here is another wonderful piece by Peter Stadlera. I particularly liked the pictures of the posters - the illustrated ones have the greater visual impact, but the one about the last performance at Vauxhall has more emotion attached to it.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Vauxhall Gardens in London. Well, let's go to this magnificent place in this post. With 100,000 visitors per summer, open-air dining and blazing fireworks displays, Vauxhall Gardens was the biggest attraction of its day and became the most famous pleasure garden in Europe.



- ▶ "The gardens opened each evening from May to September. Music, listened to in the open air while strolling through leafy groves, was the prime attraction. The first building you saw, on entering, was an octagonal rotunda 'temple', in effect Britain's first bandstand. Its upper floor was big enough to house a full orchestra and there was a balcony for singers. Under the management of Jonathan Tyers, the Gardens aimed to bring contemporary music to a mass public, and poets, among them Christopher Smart, wrote many hundreds of songs especially for Vauxhall. Thomas Arne and William Boyce were favoured composers, but in Tyers' time it was Handel's music that dominated the repertory, and a marble statue of Handel by Roubiliac, now in the V&A, presided over the Gardens. In April 1749 the Music for the Royal Fireworks had its grand rehearsal at Vauxhall, prior to its damp exposure on the Thames, and 12,000 fans flocked to hear it, causing a three-hour traffic jam on London Bridge.



- ▶ "The 100,000 visitors per season that Vauxhall averaged were the largest audience for serious music that had ever been gathered. Vauxhall also provided England with a public art gallery long before the Royal Academy and the National Gallery were thought of. Tyers' artistic adviser was his friend William Hogarth, who employed tutors and students from his St Martin's Lane Academy to produce a series of big genre paintings for the Gardens, many of them by Francis Hayman who is now almost as forgotten as Tyers.







www.danby.co.uk



- 2) In the 1700s, the *Magpie and Stump* was one of the most renowned 'mughouses' in London, where people would gather for a prime view of hangings taking place at Newgate Prison (note the noose on display in the pub) - and this recalls the lurid magazine *The Newgate Calendar*, which is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.





- ▶ "When the Gardens finally closed in 1859 it was not for lack of inventiveness. Rather it was because the suburbs had spread to Vauxhall, and the noise and crowds were intolerable for the new residents. Also, rail travel had put alternative amusements, notably the seaside, within reach. So history overtook them and they had to go."

April 3



- ▶ Continuing my response to the review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*...
- ▶ The reviewer claims that I fail to understand that the *Pickwick* prefaces, in which Dickens's lies appear, are a "paratext", rather like the *Pickwick* prospectus, or even the wrapper for the serial parts. I think the argument that is being made behind the academic jargon is that the prefaces should be seen as part of the "fictional universe" of *The Pickwick Papers* - and therefore they are not really lies, but are simply an extension of Dickens's work as an author of fiction. If this is the argument, then it is ridiculous.



- Dickens biographers have treated the prefaces as biographical statements, not paratexts, and that is surely right. When Dickens wrote to *The Athenaeum* magazine in response to the letter from Seymour's son, he largely repeated the arguments of the prefaces, in a public forum, not in the context of a book, and wanted the arguments accepted as the truth. And the prefaces are clearly very different from the prospectus and the wrapper: the prospectus describes the adventures of a fictional character, Mr Pickwick, and the wrapper treats Bogg as the editor of an imaginary set of club records. The prospectus and wrapper are obviously part of *Pickwick's* fictional universe; not so the prefaces.



- And the reviewer then makes the extraordinary statement that what I am saying does not matter anyway. He compares me to those who deny Shakespeare's authorship of the plays: "If conclusive proof eventually shows that Christopher Marlowe or the Earl of Oxford wrote the works we attribute to Shakespeare," says the reviewer, "they would still be very good plays." Yes, they would still be good plays; but to say that the identity of the author does not matter is a very different thing indeed.



- First of all, consider Redwick just from the point of view of Dickens' bibliography: is the reviewer really saying that if Dickens fabricated an origin for his most successful work by far – the work, moreover, which laid the foundations for his career – it is of no consequence at all? It surely means that every Dickens biography has to be rewritten, and that Dickens is different from the man we thought him to be. But it matters too when it comes to considering the *WORKS* of Dickens. To go back to Shakespeare: I have actually interviewed the Shakespeare Oxford Society, who believe that Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, wrote the plays – this was when I was writing about unusual clubs and societies – and I remember that they pointed out lines in the plays which seemed to have 'echoes' of things which had happened in de Vere's life, or in his family history. If Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon wrote the plays then those echoes would just be coincidences, nothing more; but if de Vere was the author, the echoes would add a whole new level of meaning to the text. Isn't that important?



- And similarly, if Dickens had about Seymour, and we're examining his works with that in mind, there is the possibility of new interpretations of Dickens's works emerging. Outside of *The Pickwick Papers*, I am not an expert on Dickens's oeuvre; I read all the novels when I started the Death and Mr Pickwick project, and that was that, but I strongly suspect that, if I were to re-read the novels, given what I now know about Seymour's involvement with *Templeton*, many new interpretations of the novel's situations and characters would emerge. Indeed in *David and Mr Pickwick*, I suggest that one interpolated tale in Nicholas Nickleby, that of the Baron of Grangeley, is very likely a commentary on Seymour. That there are more things like this in Dickens's works, I would in particular look out for things which suggest the fear of Seymour's being exposed because Dickens certainly was worried that the "truth would out" about Seymour – judging from his letters. So guessed that, one day, someone like me would come along.
- Seymour is a potential research programme for the system; I only had to read Dickens's work, in the light of Death of Mr Pickwick's revelations. I'd not paid it first, their reviewer, one insight which could generate academic papers or chapters in books. Or well, you simply think their insight is worth as an important and not go for publication!
- More tomorrow

April 3



- David Shevelon has just made this very interesting observation about a Charlie Chaplin movie: "Occurred to me that the melancholic Greenwich & Son story in *Death and Mr. Pickwick*, was somehow reminiscent – although quite different too – of the tale in Charlie Chaplin's 1932 film *Lightsight*, wherein Chaplin star as fading clown, dogged with a fragile condition, *Celene*." I found out recently that one of the pieces of music in a Chaplin movie was called *Pickwick*. So perhaps there is a connection here. This is worth looking into, I think.



April 4



- ▶ Day three of my response to the review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*
- ▶ The reviewer suggests that the book's whole status as a novel is a marketing tactic, and even suggests that I "aspire" to writing non-fiction, and in support of this he claims that "At times, *Death and Mr Pickwick* reads like a sketchbook or a series of detached essays on early nineteenth-century print culture." This doesn't stand up to scrutiny for a moment. The style of *Death and Mr Pickwick* might be described as "full of life" - and I use that phrase because I was inspired to read *The Pickwick Papers* for the first time by Griff Rhys Jones's statement that *Pickwick* was "so full of life". The style is why *The Independent's* reviewer of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, a former Man-Booker Prize judge, said that the book "offers a reading experience as immersive as Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*", and as voracity in its capacity to connect us with past lives. This is nothing at all like an essay or a sketchbook on nineteenth-century print culture.

BIG BROTHER



- ▶ That full-of-life quality is something which motivated the writing throughout. There may be occasions when the style changes to a "forensic" one - which was absolutely necessary to pin down Dickens's lies - but even that can be seen as adding to the vast mixture of life which the book contains; and even the forensic style, embedded in the conversations of Scripty and Mr Imbecile, is not at all like an essay on print culture. And nothing in my background suggests that I would WANT to write a non-fiction book on nineteenth-century print culture. I have openly admitted that I am heavily influenced by the TV series *Big Brother*; and my previous published writings were about broome leisure activities. How many historians of nineteenth-century print culture have that in their background or, if they did, would admit to it? I aspired to write a novel right from the start, a fact-influenced novel, sure, but still very much a novel.



- ▶ 3) The magpie in the pub's name of course brings to mind the magpie which appears at the start of *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

1928

- And earlier in his piece, the reviewer maligns this statement about Seymour: "A definitive life of the artist has yet to be written. In the meantime, *Diary of Death* and *Mr. Pickwick*, a novel by Stephen Jarvis", as though my novel is a mere stopgap, and what is really needed is the biography. Let me tell you that it is extremely unlikely that a "definitive life" of Seymour will EVER be written – and that is because of the disgraceful behaviour of the Dickens Fellowship in the 1950s. On a number of previous occasions, I have mentioned that a huge amount of material about Seymour mysteriously vanished in 1928, and I strongly suspect that it was deliberately suppressed by the Dickens Fellowship of that era, who did not want Dickens's life exposed. But even if I am wrong about deliberate suppression, the Dickens Fellowship still bears a large part of the blame for the material being lost. As I have said before, the Dickensians knew about the material, and they could have pointed the Seymour researcher (or Seymour Lambert) to the reviewer mentioned in its direction – and the material would then almost certainly have been saved. They chose not to cooperate with Lambert, and publicly stated that his research into Seymour and Pickwick would even merit serious consideration. As a result, the material has been lost. As far as I know, I am the only person who has even bothered trying to find it.



- ▶ The behaviour of the Dickens Fellowship in the 1920s was cultural vandalism. As John Stafford Ricketts said in his recent *Sig Issue* article about *Death and Mr Pickwick*, "Pickwick remains a truly stupendous, quintessential novel, up there with the best of world literature." Anything which helps us to understand how *The Pickwick Papers* came into existence should be cherished. Instead, as a result of the behaviour of the Dickens Fellowship in the 1920s, vital material relating to Pickwick's origin has been lost. Does the reviewer express his regrets or outrage about this matter? He doesn't even mention it.
- ▶ More tomorrow.

April 4



- ▶ Most wedding cakes are tiered. But what inspired the tradition of tiering? The amazing Peter Stadlera, in his latest post on the historical background to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, provides the answer, and much more besides.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Mr Tilt, a bookseller at the corner of St Bride's Passage. What sounds like a harmless reference to a long gone bookseller of old turns out to be a very interesting story: Charles Tilt, afterwards Tilt and Bogue, occupied 85, Fleet Street, and a charming view of this shop appears in Cruikshank's 'Almanack' for March, 1835.



- "And this story is about plagiarism too: the first British graphic novel, *The Adventures of Mr Obadiah Oldbuck* was obviously, from the first, a plagiarism of...



- "...*Les Amours de Mr Vieux Bois* by Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846). Töpffer's original had appeared in Paris in 1837, although the Swiss schoolmaster had drawn an earlier version for the amusement of his pupils and friends ten years earlier; it was his third published book, following *Histoire de Mr. Jobot* (1833) and *Histoire de Mr. Crépín* (1837). The British edition that appeared in the autumn of 1841 was, in fact a plagiarism of a plagiarism as its engravings were based upon pirated edition published in 1839 by Gabriel Aubert (Paris, Aubert, Galerie Vero-Dodat)



Tilt's partner David Bogue was born in 1807 or 1808, of a respectable Scottish family, the nephew of Dr. David Bogue (1750-1825), the eminent Dissenting minister, author of *An Essay on the Divine Authority of the New Testament* (1801). In early life, Bogue became assistant to Mr. Thomas Ireland, bookseller, of Edinburgh, with whom he remained until 1836 when he came to London and joined the establishment of Charles Tilt. Tilt (born in 1797) was already well established, having worked at Hatchards and other bookselling businesses from the age of 14. His own publishing and bookselling business was established in 1826 at 86 Fleet Street, at the corner of St Bride's Passage. In 1840, Tilt passed over three senior employees to invite David Bogue to join him as a partner.



Thus, Tilt and Bogue became the publishing imprint for a wide range of books, many highly illustrated, on art, wild flowers, books of poems, chapbooks, railway companions and guides. After three years, Tilt sold his interest to Bogue for approximately £30, 000 and Bogue continued to publish a wide range of illustrated books and cheap volumes, although his fortunes began to decline in the mid 1840s. Hazell's next was George Cruikshank whose association with Charles Tilt had begun as early as 1827 and led to the successful publication of *My Sketch Book* (1833) and the annual *Cruikshank's Comic Almanack* (1834-52). Unfortunately, the association was not always successful: the Almanack had begun well, with contributions by William Makepeace Thackeray, but suffered from the competition with its rival Parrot's Almanack which began publication in 1844. Cruikshank's *Graphic* (1845, May 1841-Jan 1842), edited by Laman Blanchard, did not make any significant profits and, although well known today, such sets as *The Boodle* (1847) and *The Boodle's Children* (1848) were a complete flop at the time.



- ▶ "On his death, Charles Tilt returned to the business from which he had retired sixteen years earlier. Tilt had amassed quite a fortune and began travelling around the continent and Middle East, one trip inspiring *The Boat and the Caravan* (1847) about his tour of Egypt and Syria. In the 1850s he split his time between homes in Brighton, London and Bath. Tilt had to negotiate with various creditors and, in June 1857, the *Publishers' Circular* announced that the business had been purchased 'for a large sum' by the firm of Kent & Co. of Paternoster-row.
- ▶ Charles Tilt retired to his home in Penbridge Gardens, Baywater, where he died on 28 September 1861, leaving the considerable sum of around £180,000 to his daughter, Mrs. Jane May Gladstone.



- ▶ "Above St Andrew's Passage, soars the magnificent white steeple tower of St Andrew's Church. The steeple, designed by Christopher Wren, and his tallest, was apparently the inspiration for the first tiered wedding cakes. In the passage there was, until recently, the wine bar known as The Press House. They adopted as their slogan: 'Wine is bottled poetry' (Robert Louis Stevenson). I read that their Martin O', Garphame, advised that morning was always the best time to taste wine..."





- Of course, there had to be some eating too...



April 5



- ▶ Concluding my response to the review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*...
- ▶ The reviewer says "The strongest evidence to support the view that Seymour created Pickwick is that, before *The Pickwick Papers*, he had a tendency to draw overweight, bespectacled men". This is misleading in the extreme. The effect of the statement is to make people think "Oh, is that all that Jarvis is saying? Seymour drew some fat men with glasses before Pickwick? So what? That's nothing." But the point is, one does not begin with these drawings. One begins with the blatant contradiction which lies at the heart of Pickwick's 1847 preface. A contradiction is the hardest of hard evidence. It obviously means that Dickens's statement cannot be true, and therefore an alternative origin of Pickwick must be sought. It is only AFTER one realises that Dickens's account is false that one turns towards Seymour's previous drawings. You don't START with the drawings of fat men.



- ▶ You can now see how sly and unscrupulous the reviewer's "paratext" argument is, which I responded to the other day. By calling the preface a "paratext", the reviewer 'relabels' a lie, so that it is no longer a lie, no longer self-contradictory. The preface is now simply part of the fictional game. And then of course, the drawings become 'the strongest evidence' and are easily dismissed, as being of no great weight.
- ▶ The reviewer then follows this up by saying: "But what does it mean to create a literary character? If Seymour draws a pudgy man in tights and garters, has he created Samuel Pickwick or a drawing of a pudgy man in tights and garters?" And obviously, one is expected to say "Oh, just a pudgy man in tights and garters."



- But the point is that *The Pickwick Papers* was not just a work of words: it was really a multi-media work, a work of words AND pictures. So the question is not really: what does it mean to create a LITERARY character, but rather what does it mean to create a multi-media character? *Mr Pickwick* is a being of both the pen and the pencil, and one cannot simply erase Seymour's role in the creation of the character.



- Seymour created what has been called "The Mona Lisa of book illustrations." In *Mr Pickwick*, he created one of the most powerful images in human history. And the visual aspect of *Mr Pickwick* was all part of the character's identity, as is the case with real human beings. Indeed, the fat stomach suggests that here is a heavy boozier and a big eater, the magnifying glass on the waistcoat suggests the investigative nature of the character, and the spectacles suggest a pseudo-intellectual who is also a bit of a fool. A great deal of *The Pickwick Papers'* contents arises just from the picture of *Mr Pickwick*. The image sets the nature of the book. Moreover, the pictures helped to make *Mr Pickwick* seem like a real person, and someone to care about. And nor is this all that Seymour contributed.



- ▶ A list of Seymour's likely input would include the three other members of the Pickwick Club, Mr Jingle, some concept of Sam Weller, Mr Stiggins, the events of the first three parts, including the sagacious dog, the arbour scene, and the cricket match, and the presence of Christmas scenes. This is a substantial contribution - it is essentially laying down the structure of *The Pickwick Papers*. And let's not forget that Dickens never had such a success as *The Pickwick Papers* again. There was something great arising from the collaboration with Seymour which Dickens never equalled.

SHAME
ON
YOU



- ▶ And this gets to the heart of the matter, and the monstrosity of what Dickens and his associates did. By fabricating the origin story of *Pickwick*, and saying that Seymour contributed nothing but “the sporting tastes of Mr Winkle”, they took away Seymour’s rightful place in history. This is what is so disgusting, and what needs to be put right.
- ▶ And this current review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* does nothing on that front. It gains a spurious authority by appearing in a scholarly journal and by using academic jargon, but, as I have shown, it should not be taken seriously. It’s a disgrace. I could say more, but I’ll end there.

April 5



- ▶ Peter's Stadler's latest post follows on from his previous one. His opening remark here is a response to Michael Segers' comment on the previous post: "Church steeples to wine bars... wow!"
- ▶ "Oh yes Michael, church steeples to a wine bar and even more. On my recent Pickwickian tour I went to St Bride's Passage and discovered that there will be a new wine bar opening up in April.



- "Besides, I saw by pure luck information on a very interesting sounding play to be performed in the Bridewell Theatre next door: *The Trials and Tribulations of Mr Pickwick* by Nigel Nevinson.



"I read about the play that 'a hat stand and a trunk, and the sound of hoof beats, set us back in Dickensian times and we enter the no longer comfortable life of Samuel Pickwick'. Furthermore is said that 'this is fluent monologue about a man who never banked on prison awaiting trial. The writing provides a safe and confident haven for Nevinson's talents as a character actor. Via minimal set, simple props (used creatively and to great comic effect) and appropriate costume, Nevinson brings *Pickwick* to life endearingly, and with poise and aplomb.'

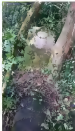


- ▶ John Stafford Ricketts pointed out that in one of pictures it looks like I am aiming a blowpipe at Lord Bird!



- "Furthermore: 'The story engages through an accessible narrative. A lot of characters are portrayed and most of this is achieved with voice.' (I had to think about *The 39 Nine Steps* which I saw last year). And: 'Nevinson really comes into his own here playing accuser and defender, witness and accused, as well as storyteller.' Well, Samuel Pickwick seems to be back again and my Pickwickian Tour continues tomorrow..."

April 6



- ▶ I have just received a great piece of news from my friend Alex Jewell, on Sunday afternoon, in Nunhead Cemetery. He and his friend John Warren discovered the grave of the lesser Tom Rother, who appears in the Guffy Club scene of Death and Mr Pickwick.
- ▶ This is what Alex told me: "This discovery is important as the existing chronologies usually say he died in Bristol, whereas my research had revealed he actually died in Deddlesham, which is why I asked John Warren to pop over to Nunhead cemetery and make some enquiries. The Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (just looked him up on their website) and printed out a grave map for us and let us get on with finding it." You can see here the photo of the grave.
- ▶ This is a fantastic discovery. Tom Rother was, as Alex says on his website, "One of the most important fighters and players in the history of boxing." And I must admit, I got a little "wobbly" when Alex told me the news. In Death and Mr Pickwick, I have Tom Rother drinking in the Guffy Club, as his old boxing rival (and later farm friend) Jack Scroggins sings a song about the time they fought.
- ▶ "Fighting a pet in prison, and even when half groggy
Did he survive him, wasn't out the lights of boxing!"
- ▶ Moreover, I have further evidence the blue jacket with 'DC' on the buttons...the clothing of the Paphos Club, which later became the model for the jacket of the Frodo Club. So this is brilliant news. Many congratulations to Alex and John!

April 6



- ▶ Peter Stadlera is in London, strolling with *Death and Mr Pickwick*...
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Cheapside and the St Mary-le-Bow Church, which is famous for its chimes. Come walking with me and get some visual impressions of that location, on my Pickwickian Tour.



- ▶ "According to tradition a true Cockney must be born within earshot of the sound of Bow Bells. Since the early 1940s, a recording of the Bow Bells made in 1926 has been used by the BBC World Service as an interval signal for the English-language broadcasts. It is still used today preceding some English-language broadcasts.



- ▶ "And in the churchyard is a statue of Captain John Smith of Jamestown, founder of Virginia and former parishoner of the church. The statue is made of bronze and stands on a Portland stone plinth. As you can see, it shows Smith dressed in Elizabethan fashion with a sword in his left hand and a book in his right. The statue is a copy by Charles Rensck of a sculpture by the American William Couper which stands in Jamestown. It was erected in 1990 and unveiled by the Jamestown Foundation of Commonwealth of Virginia, who presented it to the City of London. It was erected to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the return of Smith to England in the winter of 1609-10. Captain John Smith was a passenger of the three ships of colonists sailing for America in 1607. Smith was elected president of the newly founded colony in America due to his ability to deal with the Indians. On one occasion his life was saved by the Indian chief's daughter Pocahontas. Stay tuned for more stroller's tales..."

April 7



- ▶ Yesterday, I posted about the amazing discovery of losing legend John Lecher's ghost by Alex Jaskolski and John Skerton. Alex has also informed of another extraordinary discovery he has made. If I had known about this when I was writing Death and Mr. Pickwick, it would certainly have led to a re-write of this section dealing with the Pickwick farcurest, Life in London.
- ▶ Alex has discovered that the true originator of Life in London was the artist Robert Crankshaw. The incredible thing is that this was glaring everybody in the face! But, as far as I am aware, it has never been pointed out before. Everyone, including myself, seems to have missed the evidence, apart from Alex. Perhaps the reason is that people tend to focus on Robert Crankshaw's more famous brother, George Crankshaw; another possible reason is that the evidence appears in the second volume of the Life in London series, The First of the Adventures of Life in London, which is not as well-known as the first.
- ▶ Anyway, you can see here the frontispiece and title page of The First...



- But look at this picture, which occupies the lower section of the frontispiece. In the writing, Pierce Egan has added the words: "The play Rob Crusoe, Original suggestion and artist of the 2nd Vol, Aldous" (Egan, and you've seen it.)
- Aldous says: "There are a couple of other pieces of evidence that Rob Crusoe was the progenitor of *Late Victorian London*, but this is the one that pretty much proves it beyond a shadow of doubt." And Aldous continues: "Basically, what I'm trying to say is that it's becoming very clear that the relationship that existed between publishers, writers and book illustrators is much more complex than those so-called academics and Dickensian scholars seem to realize. Robert Cranshaw came up with the idea for *Cheer in London*. But unlike the situation between Dickens and Seymour, Egan never denied it."
- I think this is hugely important. And compare and contrast this to the truly disgraceful review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* which has just appeared in *Dickens Quarterly*, where (as I mentioned in my response to the reviewer) the reviewer has tried to rebrand Dickens's class using the academic jargon of "paradox".
- Brilliant work, Aldous!

April 7



- ▶ Recently, I posted about my visit to the Maggie and Stump pub, near the Old Bailey, where in times gone by people would gather to watch executions at Newgate Prison. Well, here is a fascinating post by Peter Stadlera on the prison.
- ▶ Peter Stadlera: "Today we go - together with *Death and Mr Pickwick* as our travel companion - to the notorious Newgate Prison and have a look at the Newgate Execution Bell."



- "For over 600 years the prison was renowned for its appalling conditions. It was said that the prison was so dirty and squalid that the floors crunched as you walked due to all of the lice and bedbugs. The women's area was equally appalling, crowded with half naked women: drunk, sometimes deranged, in leg irons and often with their children in tow.



- "The Central Criminal Court (a.k.a. the Old Bailey) now stands on the site of the old Newgate Prison.



March 31

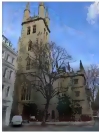


- One of Seymour's last drawings featured a statue of William III in Dublin. Peter Stadlera's latest fascinating post tells us more about this statue.



- ▶ "However, if you venture around the back of Amen Court you will find something quite spectacular: the only surviving wall of Newgate Prison!"





- ▶ "From 1605 the church of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate also had a rather ghoul-ish part to play in the executions. At midnight on the eve of an execution, a bellman would walk along the prison tunnels ringing 'twelve solemn tolls with double strokes' on his handbell whilst chanting 'All you that in the condemned hold do lie/ Prepare you, for tomorrow you shall die/ Watch all and pray, the hour is drawing near/ That you before the Almighty must appear/ Examine well yourselves, in time repent/ That you may not to eternal flames be sent/ And when St. Sepulchre's bell tomorrow tolls/ The Lord above have mercy on your souls.'





- ▶ "Although Newgate Prison has long gone, the Newgate Execution Bell still exists and is housed in the Church of St Sepulchre."

April 7



- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes has just found that *Death and Mr Pickwick* is mentioned on the website of Kennedy's fish and chip restaurant.
- ▶ <https://kennedyslondon.co.uk/>
- ▶ Great find, Frank!
- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes: "It's not often that a modern novel (or any novel for that matter) gets a mention on a restaurant website. *Death and Mr Pickwick* will be published in paperback this year and will undoubtedly attract more discerning readers in its quest to challenge the perceived origins of *The Pickwick Papers*." (See the next page for what the restaurant says.)



- Kennedy's: "Our friendly and cost-effective fish and chips restaurants in central London are inspired by the Kennedy's brand established 150 years ago as a traditional delicatessen butcher's, originally renowned for their sea-slops. We have maintained the tradition whilst expanding our menu with British food. We serve fresh fish from British waters and as such our seafood is of the utmost quality. Our traditional freshly baked pies are made from two ingredients and are a popular choice with our clients. We have two locations in the city based in Goswell Road and Whitecross Street, distinguishing us as one of the best situated places to eat in the capital."
- Kennedy's also has many associations with historical figures, including a plaque honouring James Bayle (founder of the Radical club July 1831) (Whitecross Street, London, UK). Furthermore, Goswell Road used to be known as Goswell Street, where Mr Pickwick, the hero of *The Pickwick Papers* lived. As a result of the huge success of *The Pickwick Papers*, Goswell Street became the most famous street in the world. The story behind the creation of *The Pickwick Papers* is told in the novel *Smith and Mr Pickwick* by Stephen Jarvis who regularly visits us.
- Additionally, Kennedy's caters for coach parties and private hire, so do not hesitate to enquire about booking a reservation with us.

April 7



- ▶ Following on from yesterday's post about Alex Joanides' discovery of Tom Belcher's grave, Luke G. Williams, the author of the great book *Richmond Unchained*, who has been a guest-poster on this facebook page, has just written this article about Alex's discovery for *The Peckham Peculiar*. Towards the end, Luke mentions Belcher's appearance in DaMP.

Famous boxer's grave discovered in Nunhead Cemetery



Portrait shows Tom Sayers

- But say the bones of a English boxer's discovered in Nunhead Cemetery is the latest find of the Nunhead Excavation, a new and notable addition of the famous burial ground has been discovered thanks to research conducted by leading historians Alan Jefferies and John Rogers.
- On a visit to the cemetery on April 3, Alan and John were able to discover the long lost grave of Tom Sayers (1833-1894) - one of the most famous boxers from the "golden age" of English sports and a legend in the sporting of the 19th century.
- It has long been assumed an English boxer (having boxing bouts that Sayers did and was buried in the same burial ground, however recent research has revealed that he had not the last years of his life as a resident of number 75 Colville Square, Peckham, prior to his death and burial in Nunhead. English Square was a used to be neighborhood of the old modern day Commercial Way - so in some that known as "Peckham Lane Lane".
- "Tom Sayers is one of the most important fighters and players in the history of boxing and it is a shame to provide and honor to rest in the ground," Alan and John said. "Many historians also go to the grounds of Nunhead Cemetery for their studies in planning as he fought there in some of his most famous fights and put his grave markers.
- "The inscription of the grave is only legible in certain places with other parts of the stone completely missing. However, we were able to clearly make out the names of at least three close members of the Sayers family buried to the east."



Noted above this B&W's given a Maltese Colony

- Born in 1783, Tim Batcher was the brother of the great one, arguably the greatest figure of the "golden age" period. Although I am never to-date champion of England, the fact is that he was, nevertheless, representative of the most noble genius in the land. The legendary boxing master of the time, Henry Adams, was it of him that "his point of strength of spiritual and scientific perfection ... Tim Batcher was perfect, almost unexcelled"
- During the first 30 years of the 19th century, boxing was the most popular sport in England and its leading exponent. Among the most famous men in the country (Amateur of the time and known to all as Batcher) and the sport of boxing as a whole, were held in demonstrated by the fact that he was one of the 12 persons mentioned who were selected by King George IV to act as officers of the new research organization in 1801, before receiving his "country life" in the late 1800s. Batcher was also the author of the famous "The Great Game" which is known for its years.
- Batcher's reputation as a major figure from English colonial sporting history has been acknowledged through his inclusion in a character in the historical 1905 novel *Death and Mr Pickens* by Stephen James, which examines the connections between The Pickens Papers and various forms of cultural, sporting and literary history.
- Batcher is not the only one mentioned in historical accounts the prize of the "great champion" of England, turned master and master James "Jack" Ward (1830-1814), can also be found in the grounds.

April 8



- I recently met up with Peter Stadlera at the Hung, Drawn and Quartered pub in London. As you can see, our day began with a light lunch.



- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about the equestrian statue of King William III in Dublin, blown away by agitators. The King William of Orange statue on College Green was eventually removed in November 1928, following an explosion in the early hours of Armistice Day that year. A bomb had also been placed at the base of the bronze statue of King George II in Stephens Green. It had sat on College Green since 1701, and was frequently the target of vandals (more on that below) but the explosion didn't mark the end of its traumatic life as the King's head was removed from the statue while it was placed in storage in Corporation Yard, Hanover Street!





- The Hung, Drawn and Quartered is not of Pickwickian interest in its own right, but it's not far from the street called Crutched Friars, which most definitely is. (The street takes its name from an order of mendicant friars, the "Fratres Crucifer", who settled in the area in 1249.)



- The street has a connection to my posts of the last two days, which featured Alex Joannides' discoveries about Tom Belcher and Pierce Egan. The Daffy Club scene in my book, in which Belcher and Egan appear, takes place at the Castle Tavern, but there is a person present called Peter Pidgeon, who was the landlord of the Horse and Trumpeter pub - and that pub was where the Aldgate Branch of the Daffy Club held their meetings. The pub, long gone, was at 1 Crutched Friars, but you can see me here standing at the location.



- ▶ Alex has also managed to find some older photos of Crutched Friars - these date from 1912 - and hopefully they give a better idea of what the club members would have seen as they staggered away from their drinking sessions. (Though perhaps the photos should be blurred to capture the full effect of their visual field...)
- ▶ More on my meeting with Peter tomorrow.



April 8



- ▶ In this post, Peter Stadler takes a look at Dickens's first book, *Sketches by Boz*. I enjoyed *Sketches* very much, just as Peter did. But the especially fascinating thing in Peter's post is the photo showing the 'Yorkshire Relish' edition of *Sketches*. Readers of DaMP will recall that I mention the 'Yorkshire Relish' edition of *Pickwick*, produced by the manufacturers of Yorkshire Relish sauce. (This brown sauce is still made today, although it is now called 'YR Sauce'. It is apparently very popular in parts of Ireland, though I have never seen it on sale in the UK. I wish it WERE on sale though - Elaine bought a bottle in an Irish shop in New York, and it is REALLY yummy.) I had no idea that there was a Yorkshire Relish edition of *Sketches by Boz*, though, and so this is a great find by Peter.



- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we have many references to Charles Dickens' first novel *The Pickwick Papers*. But what about his first book *Sketches by Boz*? Over the last weeks I've read this 800+ pages volume and really enjoyed it: *The Scenes, The Characters, The Tales, Sketches of Young Gentlemen and Young Couples*. Many fascinating characters, funny stories and interesting locations all told with much irony and punch.



► "The collection was first published by John Macrone in February 1836 and was later expanded and issued in monthly parts (Nov 1837-June 1839) by Dickens' next publishers, Chapman and Hall. Illustrations for all of the versions were provided by George Cruikshank. The Sketches provide delightful glimpses into life in early Victorian London. You visit Austley's, go to the Yeasthall Gardens, have a look at Newgate Prison, walk around Seven Dials. Dickens later wrote of *Sketches*: 'They comprise my first attempts at authorship. I am conscious of their often being extremely crude and ill-considered, and bearing obvious marks of haste and inexperience.' I think the contrary is right: Dickens's narration is full of vigour and passion, with the eye for the scene. Especially if you know *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick* it's an absolute must-read. By the way Dickens pseudonym Boz came from his younger brother Augustus through-the-nose pronunciation of his own nickname, Moses.



Page 100.



Page 101.



THE LAST CARRIAGE. (From "Sketches by Boz.")
Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

- "Below is modern-day Seven Dials, one of the places featured in *Sketches by Boz*."





WILLIAM OF ORANGE: STATUE IN COLLEGE GREEN, DUBLIN.
WWW.ARTISTBYNAME.COM ©2012

- ▶ "The text below is taken from the brief commentary on the statue that comes in *Ireland in Pictures*, dating from 1898:
- ▶ This equestrian statue of William III stands in College Green, and has stood there, more or less, since A.D. 1701. We say "more or less" because no statue in the world, perhaps, has been subject to so many vicissitudes. It has been insulted, mutilated and blown up so many times, that the original figure, never particularly graceful, is now a battered wreck, pieced and patched together, like an old, worn-out garment. In 1710 the statue was smeared with mud and its sceptre stolen by several students from nearby Trinity College, who were expelled. It was smeared with tar several times, and watchmen had to be posted at the statue to protect it.